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The End and Beginning of Visions: Ellen White's Last Open Vision in 1884 and Its Significance

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In 1884, Ellen White had her last open vision. It was given in Portland, Oregon. Her first open vision was given in 1844, in Portland, Maine. Jesus always illustrates the end of a thing, with the beginning of a thing.

“It was not long after the passing of the time, in 1844, that my first vision was given me. I was visiting Mrs. Haines at Portland, a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine; five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before.

“I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, ‘Look again, and look a little higher.’ At this, I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the advent people were traveling to the city which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the ‘midnight cry.’ [SEE MATTHEW 25:6.] This light shone all along the path, and gave light for their feet, so that they might not stumble.

“If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe. But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a light which waved over the advent band, and they shouted ‘Alleluia!’ Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below.” Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White, 57.

In the six-volume biography of Ellen White, written by her grandson Arthur L. White, he records a statement given by John Loughborough at the 1893 General Conference Session.

“Loughborough, in giving an address at the General Conference session nine years later, stated: “I have seen Sister White in vision about fifty times. The first time was about forty years ago.... Her last open vision was in 1884, on the campground at Portland, Oregon.” Ellen White Biography, volume 3, 256.

She was still to have dreams and visions after 1884, but the visions that occurred in public ended exactly forty years after they began, and the beginning and ending open visions both occurred in cities named Portland. The first city on the east coast of the United States, the last city was on the

west coast. Some might wish to argue that this fact means nothing more than human coincidence, and others might argue that the purpose for open visions had been fulfilled, so the Lord ended them after forty years.

The actual reason is due to the increasing disobedience and rebellion against the gift of prophecy that had been given to the Millerite movement.

“After I came to Oakland I was weighted down with a sense of the condition of things at Battle Creek, and I, weak, powerless to help you. I knew that the leaven of unbelief was at work. Those who disregarded the plain injunctions of God’s word were disregarding the testimonies which urged them to give heed to that word. While visiting Healdsburg last winter, I was much in prayer and burdened with anxiety and grief. But the Lord swept back the darkness at one time while I was in prayer, and a great light filled the room. An angel of God was by my side, and I seemed to be in Battle Creek. I was in your councils; I heard words uttered, I saw and heard things that, if God willed, I wish could be forever blotted from my memory. My soul was so wounded I knew not what to do or what to say. Some things I cannot mention. I was bidden to let no one know in regard to this, for much was yet to be developed.

“I was told to gather up the light that had been given me and let its rays shine forth to God’s people. I have been doing this in articles in the papers. I arose at three o’clock nearly every morning for months and gathered the different items written after the last two testimonies were given me in Battle Creek. I wrote out these matters and hurried them on to you; but I had neglected to take proper care of myself, and the result was that I sank under the burden; my writings were not all finished to reach you at the General Conference.

“Again, while in prayer, the Lord revealed Himself. I was once more in Battle Creek. I was in many houses and heard your words around your tables. The particulars I have no liberty now to relate. I hope never to be called to mention them. I had also several most striking dreams.

“What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks from God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying or compromise, lest its promptings cease and will and impulse control. The word of the Lord comes to us all who have not resisted His Spirit by determining not to hear and obey. This voice is heard in warnings, in counsels, in reproof. It is the Lord’s message of light to His people. If we wait for louder calls or better opportunities, the light may be withdrawn, and we left in darkness.” Testimonies, volume 5, 68.

Sister White identified that if continued rebellion against her ministry as the prophetess was manifested that the “light may be withdrawn, and” Laodicean Adventism would be “left in darkness.” In 1915, the light was withdrawn. God was and is fully capable of raising up a prophet

or prophetess whenever He chooses to do so. He raised up Elisha to follow Elijah, but there was no living prophet raised up after 1915, for the Lord had “withdrawn the light.”

When it comes to the dreams and visions of Sister White, there were three periods. The first period of forty years, where visions would occur in public, for purposes that were associated with establishing the gift within the minds of those who were in attendance when the visions occurred. Then from 1884, until her death in 1915, visions and dreams were given that were still for the edification of God’s people, but they were given in private. The third period began in 1915, and provided the evidence that Laodicean Adventism was in the darkness of apostasy.

Ancient Israel illustrates modern Israel and in the period of full blown rebellion represented by Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phineas, there was “no open vision.” The reason was their gross disobedience and rebellion. God does not change.

“Another warning was to be given to Eli’s house. God could not communicate with the high priest and his sons; their sins, like a thick cloud, had shut out the presence of His Holy Spirit. But in the midst of evil the child Samuel remained true to Heaven, and the message of condemnation to the house of Eli was Samuel’s commission as a prophet of the Most High.

“‘The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel.’ Supposing the voice to be that of Eli, the child hastened to the bedside of the priest, saying, ‘Here am I; for thou calledst me.’ The answer was, ‘I called not, my son; lie down again.’ Three times Samuel was called, and thrice he responded in like manner. And then Eli was convinced that the mysterious call was the voice of God. The Lord had passed by His chosen servant, the man of hoary hairs, to commune with a child. This in itself was a bitter yet deserved rebuke to Eli and his house.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 581.

In the apostasy of Eli’s house there was no open vision, for the Word of the Lord was “precious” in those days. The Hebrew word translated as “precious” means “rare”. From 1844 until 1884, there were “open visions,” given to Laodicean Adventism. It was first established in the history of the Philadelphian Millerite movement, and in 1856 it began to identify that the Philadelphian movement had transitioned unto the Laodicean movement, but the open visions continued, for God is longsuffering and merciful.

Then in 1863, rebellion against the foundational truths began, but the “open visions” continued until 1884. Then a change occurred. In Ezekiel chapter eight, the four abominations are portrayed as escalating in nature. 1884, represents the near conclusion of the first generation and the beginning of the second generation. Advent history documents that in 1881, and then again in 1882, two significant growths in rebellion occurred.

In 1881, the General Conference President (George Butler), wrote and placed a series of articles in the Review and Herald, in which he argued that some portions of the Bible were more inspired than other portions, and by the conclusion of his articles he actually identified some portions of the

Bible that were not inspired. Following that in 1882, Uriah Smith, a leader of the publishing work, and at that time the leader of the educational work also, began to teach that when Sister White was shown future predictions or past sacred history, her words were inspired, but he argued, when she identified the personal failings of church members, then it was simply her human opinion.

In 1881 an open attack against the authority of the King James Bible was waged by Satan, through the medium of the president of the church, and then in the following year the leader of the educational and publishing work waged a similar attack upon the authority of the Spirit of Prophecy. From 1884, the testimony is that in those days there was no open vision. From 1863 unto 1881, the rebellion had escalated to include the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and no longer simply represented the rejection of the foundations.

The four abominations that are represented in Ezekiel chapter eight, are accomplished by the ancient men, which represents the leadership of Jerusalem, which began as a legal church entity as Laodicean Adventism in 1863. At that point in time an article was published in the Review and Herald, that some historians assign to the authorship of James White, though the documentation of the article actually points more to Uriah Smith as the actual author. Be that as it may, the curse against rebuilding Jericho was clearly fulfilled by James White, and Uriah Smith was the person who created the counterfeit 1863 chart. By 1881, the president of the General Conference was placing articles in the Review and Herald, that argued against the full authority of the Bible, and then in the following year Uriah Smith began an attack against the authority of the Spirit of Prophecy.

The ancient men that were supposed to be the guardians were leading out in an open attack that began with an attack upon the foundational truths represented in Miller's dream and illustrated upon Habakkuk's two tables. From there they began to attack the two witnesses of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. In the same period of time (early 1880's), the leader of the health work, John H. Kellogg, began to introduce the spiritualism of pantheism to the leadership of the church. In 1881, James White was laid to rest, and Sister White was in the midst of an escalating rebellion of the leadership of the educational, health and political structure of the church.

The message that had arrived in 1856, which was the increased light of the "seven times," and also the message to Laodicea, had been rejected, and the Lord intended to repeat that very message at the General Conference in Minneapolis in 1888, through the message presented by Elders Jones and Waggoner. Their message was not a new message, and when those who resisted their message were addressed by Sister White she identified that the rebels believed that their resistance of the message of Jones and Waggoner represented their responsibility to defend the old landmarks, which are also the old foundations. Their rebellion revealed that by 1888, they no longer understood what the foundations were, which is that the foundational truths represent the righteousness of Christ. In the context of the landmarks and William Miller's rules she stated:

"We should know for ourselves what constitutes Christianity, what is truth, what is the faith that we have received, what are the Bible rules—the rules given us from the highest authority. There are many who believe without a reason on which to base their faith, without sufficient

evidence as to the truth of the matter. If an idea is presented that harmonizes with their own preconceived opinions, they are all ready to accept it. They do not reason from cause to effect, their faith has no genuine foundation, and in the time of trial they will find that they have built upon the sand.

“He who rests satisfied with his own present imperfect knowledge of the Scriptures, thinking this sufficient for his salvation, is resting in a fatal deception. There are many who are not thoroughly furnished with Scriptural arguments, that they may be able to discern error, and condemn all the tradition and superstition that has been palmed off as truth. Satan has introduced his own ideas into the worship of God, that he might corrupt the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. A large number who claim to believe the present truth, know not what constitutes the faith that was once delivered to the saints—Christ in you the hope of glory. They think they are defending the old landmarks, but they are lukewarm and indifferent. They know not what it is to weave into their experience and to possess the real virtue of love and faith. They are not close Bible students, but are lazy and inattentive. When differences of opinion arise upon the passages of Scripture, these who have not studied to a purpose and are not decided as to what they believe, fall away from the truth. We ought to impress upon all the necessity of inquiring diligently into divine truth, that they may know that they do know what is truth. Some claim much knowledge, and feel satisfied with their condition, when they have no more zeal for the work, no more ardent love for God, and for souls for whom Christ died, than if they had never known God. They do not read the Bible [in order] to appropriate the marrow and fatness to their own souls. They do not feel that it is the voice of God speaking to them. But, if we would understand the way of salvation, if we would see the beams of the Sun of righteousness, we must study the Scriptures for a purpose, for the promises and prophecies of the Bible shed clear beams of glory upon the divine plan of redemption, which grand truths are not clearly comprehended.” *The 1888 Materials*, 403.

This statement is taken from her testimony during the period of 1888, and she identifies that the rebels are building a foundation upon sand, though they know it not. She states, “A large number who claim to believe the present truth, know not what constitutes the faith that was once delivered to the saints—Christ in you the hope of glory. They think they are defending the old landmarks, but they are lukewarm and indifferent.” She identifies them as still in the Laodicean condition, for they are “lukewarm.” And she identifies “the faith that was once delivered to the saints—Christ in you the hope of glory.” Christ is the Rock of Ages, and as the Rock of Ages, He represents the jewels of Miller’s dream.

“The warning has come: Nothing is to be allowed to come in that will disturb the foundation of the faith upon which we have been building ever since the message came in 1842, 1843, and 1844. I was in this message, and ever since I have been standing before the world, true to the light that God has given us. We do not propose to take our feet off the platform on which they were placed as day by day we sought the Lord with earnest prayer, seeking for light. Do you think that I could give up the light that God has given me? It is to be as the Rock of Ages. It has been guiding me ever since it was given.” *Review and Herald*, April 14, 1903.

She identifies an important reality of the rebels, who were Ezekiel's ancient men, when she states, "They do not reason from cause to effect." The wicked cannot or will not reason from cause to effect. The effect of the 1888 General Conference session was so rebellious that Sister White determined to leave, but her angelic guide commanded her that she must stay and record the parallel history of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. The rebellion of the ancient men was the effect, and the cause was the rejection of the Laodicean message that arrived with the increased light of the "seven times" in 1856, and then escalated to the rebellion against the foundations in 1863, which then led to the attack upon first the Bible and then the Spirit of Prophecy, along with the introduction of Kellogg's spiritualism.

Of course the ancient men's historians through history have covered the truths associated with the rebellion with rubbish, traditions, customs and dishes of fables, for those who participate in that type of rebellion always attempt to hide the evidence.

Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Isaiah 25:19.

The men Isaiah is addressing in the verse are they who he identifies as "the scornful men that rule this people in Jerusalem," and are the same ancient men that were to be the guardians of the people in Ezekiel chapter eight. In Ezekiel's testimony, at the second abomination, which marks the second generation of Adventism, they answer the questions that Isaiah's scornful men ask, "for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth" (Ezekiel 8:12).

There is "Woe" pronounced upon those historical revisionists that attempt to cover the truth of the rebellion that led to and occurred in 1888.

We will continue this study in the next article.

"I must speak to you in reference to the meetings in Minneapolis. I at one time decided to leave the meeting because I saw and felt the strong spirit of opposition that prevailed. I could not for one moment acknowledge the spirit which moved with a controlling power upon Brother Morrison and Brother Nicola. I cannot for a moment question what manner of spirit you were of. Certainly it was not the Spirit of God, and lest you should continue in this deception I now write to you.

"The night after I had decided not to remain longer in Minneapolis, in a dream or vision of the night—I cannot tell certainly which—a person of tall, commanding appearance brought me a message and revealed to me that it was God's will for me to stand at my post of duty, and that God Himself would be my helper and sustain me to speak the words He should give me. He said, 'For this work the Lord has raised you up. His everlasting arms are beneath you. From this meeting decisions will be made for life or for death; not that anyone need to perish, but spiritual pride and self-confidence will close the door that Jesus and His Holy Spirit's power shall not be admitted. They shall have another chance to be undeceived, and to repent, confess their sins, and come to Christ and be converted that He shall heal them.'

“He said, ‘Follow me.’ I followed my guide and he led me to the different houses where brethren made their homes, and he said, ‘Hear the words here spoken, for they are written in the book of records, and these words will have a condemning power upon all who act a part in this work which is not after the spirit of wisdom from above, but after the spirit that descendeth not from above, but is from beneath.’

“I listened to words uttered that ought to make every one of those ashamed who uttered them. Sarcastic remarks were passed from one to another, ridiculing their brethren A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and Willie C. White, and myself. My position and my work were freely commented upon by those who ought to have been engaged in the work of humbling their souls before God and setting their own hearts in order. There was seemingly a fascination in brooding over imaginary wrongs and expressions of imagination of their brethren and their work, which had no foundation in truth, and in doubting and speaking and writing bitter things as the result of skepticism and question and unbelief.

“Said my guide, ‘This is written in the books as against Jesus Christ. This spirit cannot harmonize with the Spirit of Christ, of truth. They are intoxicated with the spirit of resistance and know not any more than the drunkard what spirit controls their words or their actions. This sin is peculiarly an offense to God. This spirit bears no more the semblance to the Spirit of truth and righteousness than the spirit that actuated the Jews to form a confederacy to doubt, to criticize and become spies upon Christ, the world’s Redeemer.

“I was told by my guide that there had been a witness to the Christless talk, the rabble talk which evidenced the spirit that prompted the words. When they entered their rooms evil angels came with them, because they closed the door to the Spirit of Christ and would not listen to His voice. There was not a humbling of the soul before God. The voice of prayer was seldom heard, but criticism and exaggerated statements and suppositions and conjectures and envy and jealousy and evil surmising and false accusing were current. Had their eyes been opened they would have seen that which would have alarmed them, the exulting of evil angels. And they would have seen also a Watcher who had heard every word and registered these words in the books of heaven.

“I was then informed that at this time it would be useless to make any decision as to positions on doctrinal points, as to what is truth, or to expect any spirit of fair investigation, because there was a confederacy formed to allow of no change of ideas on any point or position they had received any more than did the Jews. Much was said to me by my Guide that I have no liberty to write. I found myself sitting up in bed in a spirit of grief and distress, also with a spirit of firm resolve to stand at my post of duty to the close of the meeting and then wait for the directions of the Spirit of God telling me how to move and what course to pursue.” *The 1888 Materials*, 277, 278.