

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy

By THOMAS A. DAVIS

R H 1956

A question that is not fully understood even by some church members is this: What is the relationship between the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy? Are we to regard the writings of Ellen G. White as the voice of God speaking to us just as surely as from the Bible? Or should we think of them as being of somewhat lesser inspiration? Here is an illustration that will help clarify the relation of the two.

Our family enjoys traveling. New roads, new country, new towns, new sights and sounds, hold great interest for us. Now, suppose we should decide that during our vacation this summer we will leave our home in Canada, cross the United States border, and visit some of the many places of interest there.

But just where shall we go in that vast country? Obviously we shall be able to see only a very little in the few days at our disposal. So we find a map of our neighbor to the south and spread it out on the table. Here before us is each of the forty-eight States and the District of Columbia. The States are not very large on the map, and there is not much detail, but the general outlines are given and the major cities, rivers, mountains, and highways are shown. Now where shall we go? To New York? Florida? Washington, D.C.? California?

For several years I have cherished a desire to visit the Grand Canyon in Arizona, so, after a little discussion, we decide to see this marvel of nature this summer. At last our vacation time arrives. We pile our baggage in the car, cross the border, and drive through Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, and so on down toward Arizona. In the glove compartment we carry our map of the whole nation, with all the main routes shown. This will direct us to the general area of the Grand Canyon, so we use it all the way.

A More Detailed Map

On entering Arizona we stop at a gasoline station. The friendly attendant, noticing our out-of-State license plates, inquires as to our destination, then asks whether we have a detailed map of the canyon. Learning that we do not, he gives us one. As we approach our goal we are grateful for the new map, for it shows us many details that were not on the other one. Because we have a more minute

outline, we are able to recognize many important landmarks that show us almost exactly where we are and almost precisely how much farther we have to travel. And because of the detail we can appreciate many things of beauty and grandeur we might otherwise have missed.

To a certain degree this is the relationship of the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy. The Spirit of prophecy is not to take the place of the Bible. It does not make the Bible less necessary or precious. God's Word is the great map that gives us the bold, sweeping outlines of history. In it we find the big issues, the commanding events, the towering landmarks of prophecy, but the details are often of necessity omitted. In the gift of prophecy God has graciously presented to us, with greater detail, an enlarged map, as it were, of the portion of the highway of time over which we are traveling. Thus we may anticipate and be prepared for the sharp turns and dangerous grades that we are approaching.

For example, Revelation 13 contains a thumbnail sketch, so to speak,

Bright Future

By EDA A. REID

Rejoice, ye that sorrow, our Lord is soon coming,
Our Lord who has triumphed o'er death and the grave,
Coming to take us to mansions celestial,
Coming in glory His people to save.

Homes for the pilgrims, and robes for the righteous,
And glorious crowns are promised us there;
But sweeter than all will be to see Jesus,
And in His blest presence forget every care.

No funeral trains, no badges of mourning
Shall ever be seen in that beautiful land,
No dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections
Shall mar the deep joy of that home He has planned.

Where only confusion and promises broken
Were all we could see through our anguish and pain,
Beautiful harmony then will be shown us,
Perplexities vanish, and all things be plain.

We are bound homeward; the gates of the city
Will soon open wide to all who believe.
Let faith pierce the darkness; let this thought encourage—
Soon Jesus is coming His own to receive.

of the final crisis, when the remnant church and the Sabbath will be the objects of universal attack by the religious and civil powers of earth. But as we read the Spirit of prophecy, especially *The Great Controversy*, we find in the last several chapters an expansion of the four or five verses of Revelation 13, dealing with that subject in greater detail.

Dangers Shown

The Spirit of prophecy also presents a more minute sketch of the specific area of modern life in which we are living, together with its dangers.

For example, in 2 Timothy 3:1-7 we are given a prophetic warning of the character of last-day humanity. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, . . . unholy, . . . heady, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Then, in all nine volumes of the *Testimonies* we have a more detailed description given to awaken us to our condition and needs, and to show us the divine remedy for sin.

So that the readers of a certain popular magazine might test their powers of observation and knowledge of U.S. geography, a series of small, isolated sections from various parts of the map have been published recently, and subscribers have been invited to try to recognize the areas from which they have been taken. Doubtless a large number of people have had real difficulty in deciding just where many of the sections belong on the larger map.

Likewise, the map given to us by our imaginary station attendant would have been less valuable if we had not visualized it in the broader setting of our map of the whole United States. Thus to truly appreciate and understand the place of the prophetic gift for the church today, it is necessary that we recognize it to be an enlarged portion of the Master Map, God's Word, both in precept and prophecy.

How grateful we should be, then, that in these last days, with the road ahead becoming more and more dangerous, difficult, and uncertain, that God has given us the Spirit of prophecy to show us in wonderful detail this portion of the last few miles of the highway of time.