

The Story of Great Controversy And the Spirit of Prophecy 02. Another Prophet Appears

With the passing of the centuries, Satan knew, from the writings of Daniel and Revelation, that something important was to occur about the year 1844. And so it came about. And what was this great crisis that Satan must meet and overcome? It was a second revelation from God, through the writings of a special messenger called by the Lord.

We can now see why, in the mid-1800s, Satan again aroused himself to keep the newly given inspired messages from God; from being written, printed, and circulated. Once produced, he must tempt people to think that they were unimportant, need not be read, or were faulty in some way.

Young Ellen Harmon was just a teen when the Great Disappointment came in 1844. She had been among these who were expecting the coming of Jesus to the earth at that time. When she was nine years of age, she suffered a severe injury from a stone thrown by one of her classmates which struck her in the face causing severe bleeding and later loss of consciousness for a long while.

When she did recover a little and tried to return to school, she found she was unable to do so and had to leave school with only 3 grades of education. Her health deteriorated until all thought she would not live long.

Her health already seriously impaired, she was worsening rapidly. It seemed that tuberculosis would soon take her life. She could speak only in a whisper. Her heart was damaged and something was wrong with her lungs. She found it difficult to breathe while lying down; and often, in the middle of the night, her mother or someone else in the home had to bolster her almost to a sitting position in bed. The situation steadily grew worse. Unable to obtain much sleep at night, she would frequently be awakened by cough and bleeding from her lungs.

But little Ellen Harmon loved the Lord. Indeed, she was one of the most dedicated Christians to be found at that time. God can best use the little folk who, in their humility, recognize that all they have is God; and they want to serve Him as fully as they can.

Even though it was December, 1844, in the northern state of Maine, Ellen decided to accept the invitation to visit a close friend, Mrs. Elizabeth Haines who also loved the Lord. Only a little older than her, they had known each other for years. Since she was going to die soon anyway, Ellen felt that she might as well brave the winter blasts and visit Elizabeth for a few days in South Portland. They could talk together about the recent Great Disappointment of October 22, which they both had believed in, and pray together.

Early one morning, three other young women stopped to visit and pray with them. They all went to a second-floor room, where they praised the Lord that Ellen was still alive and discussed their concerns about the Great Disappointment which had recently occurred. Oh, what a blessed time it was for little Ellen. She was so happy to be with these other friends, even though her parents were also firm believers in the Advent message and it would only be for a short time before she must return home. As the five knelt in prayer, suddenly:

“While I was praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I was wrapped in a vision of God’s glory, and seemed to be rising higher and higher from the earth, and was shown something of the travels of the Advent people to the Holy City, as narrated below.” Early Writings, 13.

Revelation, that last book of the Bible, which the Apostle John had written on Patmos, had been a problem to Satan for centuries. But little did he realize that something was now happening that would make things even worse for him. For after nineteen hundred years, God had once again bestowed the prophetic gift of divine Inspiration on a human being.

Ellen described that first vision in a letter written about a year later to Enoch Jacobs, editor of the Day Star. Here is the first part of it:

“While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world. 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. 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.” Early Writings, 14-15.

One question had been uppermost in the thoughts of the five young ladies that morning: Was prophecy fulfilled on October 22, or had their experience in the Advent Movement been a delusion? The vision revealed that God had led them in their past experience. Indeed, the Midnight Cry was that great light which was to guide them along a path which, if they followed it faithfully, would lead them to the City of God!

Oh, what encouragement there was in this vision! And what encouragement it is for the little flock today, as we follow close in the tracks of Jesus as, through the Spirit of Prophecy writings, He opens before us the deeper meaning of Scripture. There were other questions to be answered, but they would come as the people of God studied and additional visions were given.

“What was that Midnight Cry light?” The original message by Samuel Snow revealed that the ending date of Daniel 8:14 was linked to the Day of Atonement cleansing of the Sanctuary, which, that year, fell on October 22. Gradually, that light became more and more clear with the passing of time. Part of it was revealed to Hiram Edson on the morning of October 23, when he was shown that the Sanctuary was not on earth but in heaven, and that Jesus had entered the second apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary. Later came the unfolding truth about the law of God and the Sabbath shining most brightly within the Holy of Holies. That Midnight Cry light if we are faithful, will guide us all the way to our heavenly home.

Little Ellen, so very young, weak and frail, had been given a work for God which she dared not lay down. With the passing years, more and more light would come, until the brief outline given in that first vision would swell to a massive amount of wondrous truth, which, in detail, amount, and extent, would exceed anything given by God through earlier prophets.

Satan feared for what the future might bring if this young girl was not given one hindrance after another, to keep her from carrying forward her work. He must encourage men to find every possible reason to reject her messages. Ellen was to live a life filled with difficulties, yet she knew that she must cling to Jesus and keep going forward.

A Decision is Made: About a week later, Ellen was told that she must tell others about the light she had received, and that she would suffer for having done it. The following quotation, clearly reveals the personal crisis Ellen went through:

“This vision troubled me exceedingly. My health was very poor, and I was only seventeen years old. I knew that many had fallen through exaltation, and that if I in any way became exalted, the Lord would leave me, and I should surely be lost. I earnestly prayed that the burden might be laid on some other one. But all the light I could get was, ‘Make known to others what I have revealed to you.’

“I was unreconciled to go out into the world. I had naturally but little confidence. When I had the assurance that all was right between me and God, then my confidence was strong. I was then willing to do anything, and suffer anything; and relying upon the strength of God could declare the testimony without fear. But the work looked great, and the trials severe. The idea of a female traveling from place to place caused me to draw back. I looked with desire into the grave. Death appeared to me preferable to the responsibilities I should have to bear.

“At length the Lord hid His face from me. I was again in darkness and despair. I feared that He had left me because I was unwilling to go and do His will. The company of believers in Portland sincerely sympathized with me. They seemed to understand my case, and while some sought to comfort me, others were faithful in warning me of my danger. I was afraid I had grieved the Spirit of the Lord from me forever, and thought if He would reveal Himself to me again, I would obey Him, and would go anywhere. How small the opposition and frowns of men appeared to me then, compared with the frown of God.

“The meetings were held at my father’s house; but my distress of mind was so great that I absented myself from the meetings. This did not relieve me from the burden which weighed so heavily upon me, and again I attended the meetings.

“The church all united in earnest prayer for me, and once more I consecrated myself to the Lord, and felt willing to be used to His glory.

“While praying, the thick darkness that had enveloped me was scattered, a bright light, like a ball of fire, came towards me, and as it fell upon me, my strength was taken away. I seemed to be in the presence of Jesus and of angels. Again it was repeated, ‘Make known to others what I have revealed to you.’ I earnestly begged that if I must go and relate what the Lord had shown me, that I might be kept from exaltation. Then an angel told me that my prayer was answered, and that if I should be in danger of exaltation, I should be afflicted with sickness. Said the angel, ‘If ye deliver the message faithfully, and endure unto the end, ye shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the river of the water of life.’ ” 2 Spiritual Gifts, 36-37.

Ellen committed herself to obey God and tell what He gave her, regardless of all opposition and trials she might meet. Once again she had the deep peace of acceptance with God. This was more precious to her than everything else.

Her first trip in a wagon to speak in a meeting outside of Portland, Maine, where she lived, was in mid-January 1845. Too ill to sit up for the journey, she climbed into the back of a horse-drawn wagon and laid down. Friends covered her with a buffalo robe. Her sister’s husband drove the wagon in freezing cold weather. They set out on the thirty-mile journey to Poland, Maine, to his home.

When she rose in front of the group, Ellen could not speak above a whisper. This continued for five minutes. Then her voice became strong and clear and she spoke for two hours.

“When my message was ended, my voice was gone until I again stood before the people, when the same singular restoration was repeated. I felt a constant assurance that I was doing the will of God, and saw marked results attending my efforts.” Life Sketches, 72-73.