

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

THE SPIRIT OF  
PROPHECY AND  
THE CAUSE  
OF REFORM

JAMES WHITE



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# **The Spirit of Prophecy and the Cause of Reform**

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**Ellen G. White**

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### **About the Author**

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

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by James White

Mrs. White needs the help of all who can help in the cause of truth and reform. The people generally are slow to move, and hardly move at all. A few move cautiously and well, while others go too fast. The work of reform is not brought about in a single day. The people must be helped where they are. They can be helped better by one standing on the line of truth nearest them, than on the side the greatest distance from them. It is best for them to be taught on all points of truth and duty by persons of judgment and caution, and as fast as God in His providence unfolds them to his people.

He who is but partly reformed himself, and teaches the people, will do some good. He who sees the duty of reform, and is full strict enough in any case, and allows of no exceptions, and drives matters, is sure to drive the reform into the ground, hurt his own soul, and injure others. Such do not help Mrs. White, but greatly burden her in her arduous work. We invite, yea, entreat, such to get out of the way, and let Mrs. White come to the people.

She works to this disadvantage, namely: she makes strong appeals to the people, which a few feel deeply, and take strong positions, and go to extremes. Then to save the cause from ruin in consequence of these extremes, she is obliged to come out with reproofs for extremists in a public manner. This is better than to have things go to pieces; but the influence of both the extremes and the reproofs are terrible on the cause, and brings upon Mrs. White a three-fold burden. Here is the difficulty: What she may say to urge the tardy, is taken by the prompt to urge them over the mark. And what she may say to caution the prompt, zealous, incautious ones, is taken by the tardy as an excuse to remain too far behind.

We say to those who wish to help Mrs. White in her work, you will not find her far ahead of the people, with a few extremists. No, she is back with the people, tugging away at the wheel of reform, and has to lift all the harder because of your extreme advances. Come back, good, whole-hearted souls, and stand by her side, and lift where she lifts. What can you do there at such a distance from the people? Come back. You must meet the people where they are.

By this, dear brother, we do not mean that any are to come back to the wrong habits of the people. No, indeed. Their habits should



be right. In this respect we say to them, Go on. But those who have run ahead of the work should come back from their heated zeal, and want of Christian patience, and labor for their brethren in the cause of reform as they can bear it. In this way they can help Mrs. White, who is tugging along with a double burden of the work. There may be those, whom others cannot reach, that she can, if rashness on the part of others does not place them out of her reach. If one cannot mend a vase, he need not break it into fragments. It is possible that another can mend it.

We protest against the plan practically taught by some, “Cure or Kill,” and give a dose accordingly. Some sores need help in their cure, others will work their own cure best. It takes time to reform a poor, sinful, intemperate, blind, stubborn piece of humanity. It is a large job. And those who come a good way short of the faith of Abraham, and the patience of Job, had better lay out a little more time and toil on their own case, before going to work for others. He who deals with mind, engages in the nicest piece of business ever undertaken by mortal man. And the greater the reform, and the closer the work, the more difficult and responsible it is.

Some persons can be converted in a day, others in a week, and still others in a month, while it takes from one to two years to convert and thoroughly reform some. Those who have a work laid upon them for others, will patiently set before the people plain principles, and clear facts, and then leave them to answer for the use they make of them. Those called to teach, are responsible for what they teach, and how they live their own teachings. And it should be a matter of great relief to them, that they are not responsible for the manner the people dispose of their teachings, providing they do their duty, both by precept, and example. Let him who teaches make haste to do his duty, then patiently wait the result. Don't drive. “My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.”

God has called some to teach the truth, and has called all to live it, teachers, and all. Some leave off living out the sweet principles of the truth, and go to battling for it. Now if they cannot do both, they had better live out the truth, and leave the teaching of it to those who can both patiently live and preach the truth. In, fact, those not especially called of God, and qualified for the work, will be safest for themselves and others in the position of learners.

Satan stands ready to tempt unconsecrated persons, and prejudice them against the truth. And those who practice it, and especially those who teach it should be exceeding careful not to give Satan good grounds to tempt people concerning their course. The day of the Lord is the great event before us. The keeping of the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus is the great duty of God's people. And that they may do this acceptably, they must reform in life, and cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Those who drop all other points, and run their own testimony all on the health, and dress reform, will disgust the people, and before they are aware of it, they will introduce a spirit of discussion, and contention into their meetings.

The health reform has not taken the place in any respect whatever, of the third angel's message. It is a work designed to follow in its wake....Let the work go on, saith my soul, in all its branches. Not a piece at a time, lest it go all to pieces; but let it move on as a complete whole. Not fluttering and trembling in the wind, but like an old seventy-four gun ship, let all the friends of truth and reform get on board and work together. Yet let all the friends of Jesus, His coming, and the future glory of the kingdom, patiently, cheerfully, joyfully unite and stand together in the work of preparation.—[The Review and Herald, March 17, 1868.](#)

*Ellen G. White Estate  
Washington, D.C.  
January 1969*