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PREFACE

Rare indeed it is in these changing times that a book lives on through a century in ever-increasing demand and takes its place in current reading by the side of books dealing with present issues. Yet such is the enviable record of *Early Writings of Ellen G. White*. Through the years there have been many printings of the several editions. It now appears in a fifth American edition.

This popular little volume is rightly named, being a republication of the first three Ellen G. White books—*Christian Experience and Views of Mrs. E. G. White*, first printed in 1851; *A Supplement to Experience and Views*, issued in 1854; and *Spiritual Gifts, Volume I*, which appeared in 1858.

The wide and lasting popularity of *Early Writings* may be attributed to the unwaning desire to possess and study the messages of information and encouragement which came early to the church through the prophetic gift.

The second printing of this matter was made in 1882 in two small volumes—*Experience and Views* and the *Supplement* comprising the first, and *Spiritual Gifts* the second. As to certain additions to the first of these original works and some slight editorial changes made at that time, the publisher's preface states:

"Footnotes giving dates and explanations, and an appendix giving two very interesting dreams, which were mentioned but not related in the original work, will add to the value of this edition. Aside from these, no changes from the original work have been made in the present edition, except the occasional employment of a new word, or a change in the construction of a

sentence, to better express the idea, and no portion of the work has been omitted. No shadow of change has been made in any idea or sentiment of the original work, and the verbal changes have been made under the author's own eye, and with her full approval."

The two companion books were also reissued as a single volume in 1882 under the title *Early Writings*. In 1906 the type was reset to make the third American edition, which has had wide distribution, meeting the ever-increasing demand. The paging of this edition became the standard for all reference work and the subsequently published indexes to the writings of Mrs. White.

The fourth edition of *Early Writings* was published in 1945. Forty years of printing and reprinting made necessary new printing plates. As the type was reset the content was held page for page with the edition it succeeded. Modern spelling and current forms of punctuation were employed and a new preface reviewed briefly the history of the book.

This fifth edition is characterized by a historical prologue, added to furnish the reader with a knowledge of the times and circumstances of the various portions of the book and by several appendix notes provided to explain expressions and situations not so well understood now as at the time of writing. There has been no change of the E. G. White text nor change in the paging from the fourth edition which this succeeds, consequently it harmonizes with the *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*.

In *Experience and Views* is presented Mrs. White's first biographical sketch, briefly tracing her experience through the Advent movement of 1840-44. Then follow a number of the earlier visions, many of which had first appeared in print in broadside or periodical article form.

The *Supplement* explains certain expressions of the earlier work which had been misunderstood or misconstrued, and gives additional counsel to the church. Its publication preceded by one year the first pamphlet bearing the title of *Testimony for the Church*.

Spiritual Gifts, Volume I, being the first published account of the long-extended conflict between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels, is cherished for its vivid descriptions and its compactness, touching as it does only the more salient points. In succeeding years this brief story of the conflict was greatly amplified in the four volumes of *The Spirit of Prophecy*, published 1870-84. After wide distribution, this four-book set was replaced by the well-known and widely read Conflict of the Ages Series, presenting the account in still more detailed form, as it had been presented to Mrs. White in many revelations. Even though the fuller volumes—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *The Desire of Ages*, *The Acts of the Apostles*, and *The Great Controversy*—present the conflict story in its more complete form, the initial writing of the account as here presented in its brief, clear-cut, simple form, will, with *Experience and Views*, always be in large demand.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARCH, 1963

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION OF "EXPERIENCE AND VIEWS"

We are well aware that many honest seekers after truth and Bible holiness are prejudiced against visions. Two great causes have created this prejudice. First fanaticism, accompanied by false visions and exercises,

has existed more or less almost everywhere. This has led many of the sincere to doubt anything of the kind. Secondly, the exhibition of mesmerism, and what is commonly called the "mysterious rapping," are perfectly calculated to deceive, and create unbelief relative to the gifts and operations of the Spirit of God.

But God is unchangeable. His work through Moses in the presence of Pharaoh was perfect, notwithstanding Jannes and Jambres were permitted to perform miracles by the power of Satan, that resembled the miracles wrought by Moses. The counterfeit also appeared in the days of the apostles, yet the gifts of the Spirit were manifested in the followers of Christ. And it is not the purpose of God to leave His people in this age of almost unbounded deception without the gifts and manifestations of His Spirit.

The design of a counterfeit is to imitate an existing reality. Therefore the present manifestation of the spirit of error is proof that God manifests Himself to His children by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that He is about to fulfill His word gloriously.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall *prophesy*, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Acts 2:17. (Cf. Joel 2:28.)

As for mesmerism, we have ever considered it dangerous, therefore have had nothing to do with it. We never even saw a person in a mesmeric sleep and know nothing of the art by experience.

We send out this little work with the hope that it will comfort the saints.

JAMES WHITE.

Saratoga Springs, N.Y., August, 1851.

HISTORICAL PROLOGUE

Early Writings is a work of lasting and special interest to Seventh-day Adventists, for it embodies the earliest Ellen G. White books. These were written and first published in the 1850's for the edification and instruction of those who with the author had passed through the experiences of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists in the 1840's and the early 1850's. This being so, the author assumed on the part of the reader a familiarity with the history of the Advent Awakening and the development of the Seventh-day Adventist movement that emerged in 1844. Consequently experiences well understood at the time are in some instances merely alluded to, and expressions are employed which to be correctly understood, must be thought of in the framework of the history of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists in those early years.

In 1858, in writing of the sounding of the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14, Ellen White deals with the experiences of those who participated in the work and draws lessons from these experiences, rather than giving as one might expect, a clear-cut presentation of the character of these messages. See pages 232-240; 254-258. She at times employs such now unfamiliar terms as "nominal Adventist," "shut door," "open door," et cetera.

Today we are removed by more than a century from those heroic times. The reader must keep this clearly in mind. The history which was so well known to the contemporaries of Ellen White we shall now review, touching some of the high points of the experiences of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists during the decade or two preceding the first publication of the materials that appear here.