

Costly Words

And the Value of Understanding

The Fatal Words

“So the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.”

—John 2:18-21

The Fatal Words

“Christ did not design that His words should be understood by the unbelieving Jews, nor even by His disciples at this time. He knew that they would be misconstrued by His enemies, and would be turned against Him. At His trial they would be brought as an accusation, and on Calvary they would be flung at Him as a taunt.

The Fatal Words

“But to explain them now would give His disciples a knowledge of His sufferings, and bring upon them sorrow which as yet they were not able to bear. And an explanation would prematurely disclose to the Jews the result of their prejudice and unbelief. Already they had entered upon a path which they would steadily pursue until He should be led as a lamb to the slaughter.”

—Desire of Ages, 165

Three Years Later...

“Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.”’”

—Matthew 26:59–61

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“Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, ‘We heard Him say, “I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.”’ But not even then did their testimony agree.”

—Mark 14:55–59

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“Early in His ministry Christ had said, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ In the figurative language of prophecy, He had thus foretold His own death and resurrection.... These words the Jews had understood in a literal sense, as referring to the temple at Jerusalem. Of all that Christ had said, the priests could find nothing to use against Him save this. By misstating these words they hoped to gain an advantage.

Three Years Later...

“The Romans had engaged in rebuilding and embellishing the temple, and they took great pride in it; any contempt shown to it would be sure to excite their indignation. Here Romans and Jews, Pharisees and Sadducees, could meet; for all held the temple in great veneration. On this point two witnesses were found whose testimony was not so contradictory as that of the others had been. One of them, who had been bribed to accuse Jesus, declared, ‘This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.’

Three Years Later...

“Thus Christ’s words were misstated. If they had been reported exactly as He spoke them, they would not have secured His condemnation even by the Sanhedrin. Had Jesus been a mere man, as the Jews claimed, His declaration would only have indicated an unreasonable, boastful spirit, but could not have been construed into blasphemy. Even as misrepresented by the false witnesses, His words contained nothing which would be regarded by the Romans as a crime worthy of death.

Three Years Later...

“Patiently Jesus listened to the conflicting testimonies. No word did He utter in self-defense. At last His accusers were entangled, confused, and maddened. The trial was making no headway; it seemed that their plottings were to fail. Caiaphas was desperate. One last resort remained; Christ must be forced to condemn Himself.”

—Desire of Ages, 705–706

Three Years Later...

“Those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’”

—Matthew 27:39, 40

Three Years Later...

“Priests and rulers, with many others, taunted him with this false statement [from the bribed witnesses]. While he hung upon the cross, it was repeated in mockery by the scribes and Pharisees, and echoed by the multitude. ‘They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, “Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself.”’ But though misstated, Christ’s words were being fulfilled. Publicity was given to them, and they were made more impressive by the proclamations of his enemies.”

—Review and Herald, December 28, 1897

The Payoff

“Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.”

—John 2:22

The Payoff

“It was for the sake of those who should believe on Him that these words of Christ were spoken. He knew that they would be repeated. Being spoken at the Passover, they would come to the ears of thousands, and be carried to all parts of the world. After He had risen from the dead, their meaning would be made plain. To many they would be conclusive evidence of His divinity.”

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A Different Prophet, a Different Issue

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“The work in Chicago was presented in a vision given to me at midday. It laid upon me a burden which none could understand. I could not understand it. I was overwhelmed with the things presented.

“When I came to myself, I was like one stunned. Night after night the picture was before me. I saw the investments you were making, the money you were consuming....

“‘Sister White,’ you bemoan, ‘somebody has set things before you in a wrong light.’ No, no; things that no one knows have been presented to me.

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“I have been made to understand the ambitious projects that have bound up in one wicked city means which should have helped the work in this new world and put us on standing-ground. But all the necessities of this field, which were kept before you, seemed to you of less importance than the great things you were creating....

“Should you carry out your own way, means would be drawn from the treasury to support the enterprises of your creation, until the missions to which God has appointed a special work would be destitute of every facility for carrying on that work.”

—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, 141, 144

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“At the time that I saw this representation, scenes that would soon take place in Chicago, and other large cities also, passed before me. As wickedness increased, and the protecting power of God was withdrawn, there were destructive winds and tempests; buildings were destroyed by fire and shaken down by earthquakes. I saw the expensive building above referred to fall, with many others.”

—Paulson Collection, 50

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“Judge Arthur and his wife spent part of a day at my home. We had much pleasant and profitable conversation. Among other things discussed was the matter of the representation that had been given me of an expensive building in the city of Chicago, used for various lines of medical missionary work. I related how that when I was in Australia, I was shown a large building in Chicago, which, in its erection and equipment, cost a large amount of money. And I was shown the error of investing means in any such buildings in our cities.

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“As I related some of these matters, and described the building that had been shown me, Judge Arthur said: ‘I can tell you something in regard to that building. A plan was drawn up for the erection of just such a building in Chicago. It seemed necessary to our work. It would have cost considerable money. Brother William Loughborough of Battle Creek, drew up the plans, and several men occupying responsible positions in the medical work met together to consider the matter. Various locations were considered. One of the plans discussed was very similar to what you have described.’

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“Some time after this, I was shown that the vision of buildings in Chicago and the draft upon the means of our people to erect them, and their destruction, was an object lesson for our people, warning them not to invest largely of their means in property in Chicago, or any other city, unless the providence of God should positively open the way and plainly point out duty to build or buy as necessary in giving the note of warning. A similar caution was given in regard to building in Los Angeles. Repeatedly I have been instructed that we must not invest means in the erection of expensive buildings in cities.”

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“Repeatedly it has been shown me that in many cases you have worked upon minds to undermine confidence in the Testimonies.... After receiving a Testimony of reproof from me, you have said, ‘Somebody has told her these things, but they are not so.’

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“Over and over again you have told others how I once sent you a testimony reproving you for erecting a large building in Chicago, before any such building had been erected there. In the visions of the night a view of a large building was presented to me. I thought that it had been erected, and wrote you immediately in regard to the matter. I learned afterward that the building which I saw had not been put up.

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“When you received my letter, you were perplexed, and you said, ‘some one has misinformed Sister White regarding our work.’ But no mortal man had ever written to me or told me that this building had been put up. It was presented to me in vision.

“If this view had not been given me, and if I had not written to you about the matter, an effort would have been made to erect such a building in Chicago, a place in which the Lord has said that we are not to put up large buildings.

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“At the time when the vision was given, influences were working for the erection of such a building. The message was received in time to prevent the development of the plans and the carrying out of the project.

“You should have had discernment to see that the Lord worked in this matter. The very feature of the message that perplexed you should have been received as an evidence that my information came from a higher source than human lips.

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“But instead, you have over and over again related your version of the matter, saying that someone must have told me a falsehood.”

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The Chicago-L.A. Connection

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“My Dear Brother White:

“I find it possible at this time to make for you the long-promised statement in reference to the action of the Board of Trustees of the American Medical Missionary College in the spring and early summer of 1899, looking to the erection of a large medical college building in the city of Chicago. The facts are as follows:

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“During the last of May, 1899, Dr. A. B. Olsen, who was then Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the American Medical Missionary College, prompted by Dr. Bayard Holmes of Chicago, urged upon the Board the necessity of the Medical College becoming a member of the Association of American Medical Colleges in order to give it an assured standing and position among the medical institutions of this and other countries.

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“In furtherance of this object, Dr. Olsen was appointed a delegate to attend a meeting of such Association which was shortly afterwards (sic) to take place in the city of Columbus, Ohio, and make application in behalf of our medical college for membership. This he did, and such application was laid over to be acted upon at the next regular meeting to take place a year from that time.

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“Upon Dr. Olsen’s return, he reported that the principal objection urged against admitting our medical college to membership was the want of a suitable building in the city of Chicago. It was then determined by the Board to take steps at once looking toward the erection of such building. A building committee was appointed and consisted of A. B. Olsen, W. K. Kellogg, and myself. Dr. Olsen was chosen secretary of such committee and I selected chairman.

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“The committee met and immediately formulated plans for the purchase of a site and the erection of such a building. I was instructed as chairman of the committee to open negotiations looking either to the sale or mortgaging of No. 28 thirty-third Place which the College owned, and otherwise taking steps to raise the necessary funds to purchase the site and erect the building contemplated. Dr. Olsen was instructed to procure suitable plans for the College building, which he did. The cost of the site and improvements was to be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$100,000 or possibly more.

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“The committee went to Chicago, looked over several sites, and finally settled upon one on Thirteenth Street, and negotiations were opened for its purchase.

“All this took place while Dr. J. H. Kellogg was absent from the United States in Europe. After our plans were quite well completed for the going on of the work, it was thought advisable to await Dr. Kellogg’s return to this country before proceeding further with the matter.

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“I learned through others that after the Doctor did return and was advised of what had been done, that he discouraged going on with the project. Just what reasons he assigned for doing so I don’t think I ever knew.”

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“The meeting was opened by prayer by Dr. H. F. Rand. Dr. Olsen then made a brief statement of his visit to the meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges and stated that the [application from the] American Medical Missionary College was not voted upon at the meeting, but action was deferred until another year. He then emphasized the importance of securing a suitable building for the College to be located in Chicago; he stated he believed that this would aid greatly in putting the College on a favorable basis before the world and secure a desirable recognition.

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“[Dr. Olsen said] that it should be remembered that the chief reason why the Board of Health of Illinois did not recognize our school fully was because it had not a suitable building for clinical work and instruction.”

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“By this time [1912] it had become evident to all concerned that a clinical hospital was needed to provide the advanced classes of medical students with the practical experience necessary to meet all the requirements for graduation....

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“Loma Linda and its environs did not have population enough to supply such a clinical hospital with the required number of patients. So, in looking around for an area that could serve the need, the eyes of some of the brethren turned toward the city of Los Angeles.

“However, it was remembered that in 1901 Mrs. White had received instruction ‘that it would be a mistake to establish a sanitarium within the city limits’ of Los Angeles. Would the establishment of a clinical hospital in that city... be a move contrary to that counsel?

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

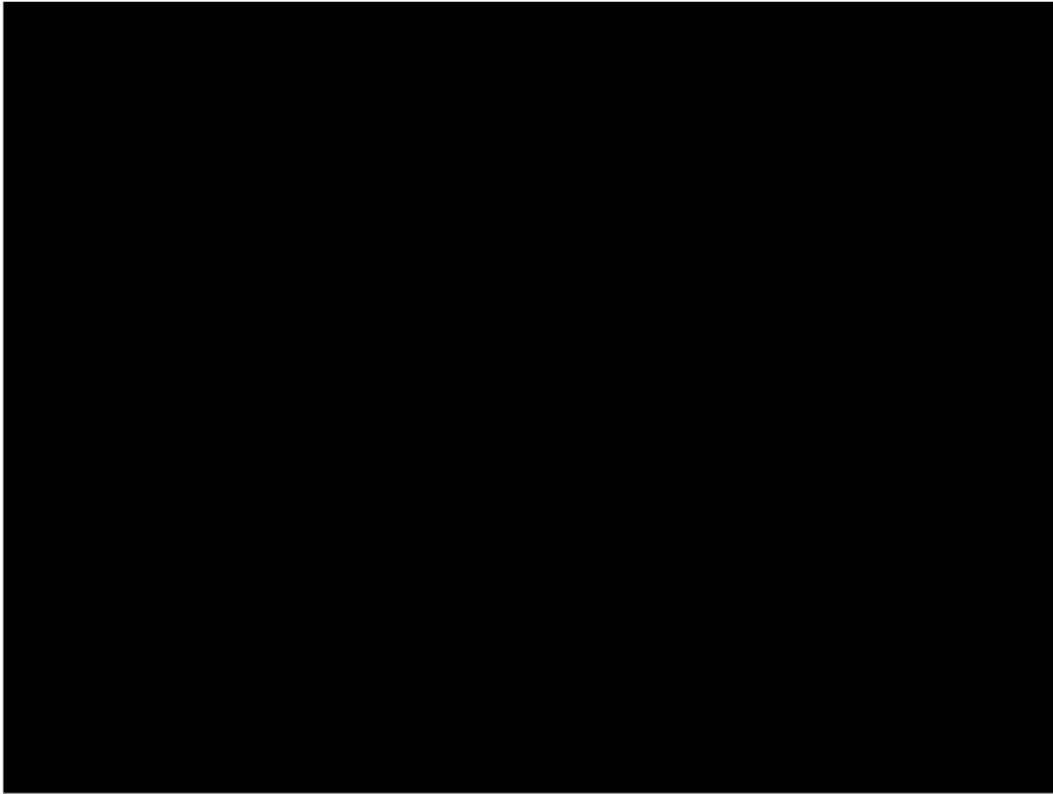
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—*The Story of Our Health Message*, 398

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My book on Adventist History, *Hindsight*, should also be available through that address if you want to plug the book for me. (\$5 +s/h; free s/h on 5 or more copies)

Questions and comments are also welcome, but please don't deprive yourself of sleep or food while waiting for a reply.

Blessings,
Dave

This first page is intentionally blacked out to provide a “blank screen” to be shown before a presentation starts.

The notes for this file are typed out in some length so that readers can more or less re-create the full message of the presentation.

Sometimes there are notes intended to be read **before** the text on the slide, though usually the notes come **after** the text. How can you know? Just look for **CLICK** in the notes. If you see the bright red word, it means that you should read the notes down that far **before** clicking to display the additional content of the slide. In such cases, when you move on from the previous slide you'll see just the heading of the new slide. That's when you read the notes. When you get to the **CLICK**, you hit the button to display the body text of the slide. Any slide with no **CLICK** in it means that you read the slide first, then read the notes, and move on.



Costly Words

And the Value of Understanding

2

CLICK for sub-title

Have you ever noticed that it's possible to open your mouth and say things that end up costing you?

Maybe you've said things that have cost you a lot of time... maybe time spent explaining how it was that your words didn't *really* mean what they seemed to mean. Or maybe you've uttered words that ended up costing you money in one way or another. Or, sadder yet, words might end up costing us a friend.

Today I want to look at two occasions in which individuals acting in the capacity of "prophet" said or wrote words which proved costly. The first case study is Jesus Himself.

The Fatal Words

“So the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.”

—John 2:18-21

Time, money, and even friends pale in comparison to what Jesus' words cost.

CLICK

The Fatal Words

“Christ did not design that His words should be understood by the unbelieving Jews, nor even by His disciples at this time. He knew that they would be misconstrued by His enemies, and would be turned against Him. At His trial they would be brought as an accusation, and on Calvary they would be flung at Him as a taunt.

Ellen White offers some insight into Jesus' reasons for making this cryptic remark:

CLICK

The Fatal Words

“But to explain them now would give His disciples a knowledge of His sufferings, and bring upon them sorrow which as yet they were not able to bear. And an explanation would prematurely disclose to the Jews the result of their prejudice and unbelief. Already they had entered upon a path which they would steadily pursue until He should be led as a lamb to the slaughter.”

—Desire of Ages, 165

And so Jesus offered no real explanation at the time,
and the words just sort of hung in the air for about...
three years.

Three Years Later...

“Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.””

—Matthew 26:59–61

The Gospel of Mark gives a similar account...

Three Years Later...

“Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, ‘We heard Him say, “I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.”’ But not even then did their testimony agree.”

—Mark 14:55–59

Not surprisingly, Ellen White has some comments on this circumstance as well:

Three Years Later...

“Early in His ministry Christ had said, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ In the figurative language of prophecy, He had thus foretold His own death and resurrection.... These words the Jews had understood in a literal sense, as referring to the temple at Jerusalem. Of all that Christ had said, the priests could find nothing to use against Him save this. By misstating these words they hoped to gain an advantage.

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“The Romans had engaged in rebuilding and embellishing the temple, and they took great pride in it; any contempt shown to it would be sure to excite their indignation. Here Romans and Jews, Pharisees and Sadducees, could meet; for all held the temple in great veneration. On this point two witnesses were found whose testimony was not so contradictory as that of the others had been. One of them, who had been bribed to accuse Jesus, declared, ‘This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.’

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“Thus Christ’s words were misstated. If they had been reported exactly as He spoke them, they would not have secured His condemnation even by the Sanhedrin. Had Jesus been a mere man, as the Jews claimed, His declaration would only have indicated an unreasonable, boastful spirit, but could not have been construed into blasphemy. Even as misrepresented by the false witnesses, His words contained nothing which would be regarded by the Romans as a crime worthy of death.

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“Patiently Jesus listened to the conflicting testimonies. No word did He utter in self-defense. At last His accusers were entangled, confused, and maddened. The trial was making no headway; it seemed that their plottings were to fail. Caiaphas was desperate. One last resort remained; Christ must be forced to condemn Himself.”

—Desire of Ages, 705–706

In the end, of course, Jesus was convicted on His own testimony. In answer to the High Priest’s interrogation, Jesus freely admitted that He *was* the Son of God, and it was this that was judged a “crime” worthy of death.

But Jesus’ misconstrued comment about the temple of His body was to come up at least once more.

Three Years Later...

“Those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’”

—Matthew 27:39, 40

Three Years Later...

“Priests and rulers, with many others, taunted him with this false statement [from the bribed witnesses]. While he hung upon the cross, it was repeated in mockery by the scribes and Pharisees, and echoed by the multitude. ‘They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, ‘Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself.’” But though misstated, Christ’s words were being fulfilled. Publicity was given to them, and they were made more impressive by the proclamations of his enemies.”

—Review and Herald, December 28, 1897

...and the purpose of all this...

the value...

the gain from those few words...was...?

The Payoff

“Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.”

—John 2:22

The Payoff

“It was for the sake of those who should believe on Him that these words of Christ were spoken. He knew that they would be repeated. Being spoken at the Passover, they would come to the ears of thousands, and be carried to all parts of the world. After He had risen from the dead, their meaning would be made plain. To many they would be conclusive evidence of His divinity.”

—Desire of Ages, 165

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It would appear that the only real gain to come from that misunderstood and misconstrued statement of Christ's was the eventual confirmation of human faith.

Evidently heaven felt it was worth doing—even at great expense.

And now, the second example:



A Different Prophet, a Different Issue

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Back in 1899, another prophet of the Lord made a statement that was to be misconstrued and misrepresented. Like the words of Christ, this comment was taken up as weapon against the Lord's messenger. Unlike the words of Christ, the real meaning and intended benefit of this comment has rarely—if ever—been considered.

Though more than a century has passed since the words were written, perhaps there is still benefit to be gained in understanding the object lesson they embodied.

To do so will require a little understanding of the surrounding history.

Continue with notes on next page

A Different Prophet, a Different Issue

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At the time, Ellen White was living in Australia, struggling to establish the work of the church there, while at the same time carrying a heavy burden for the denominational leadership back in America.

For the church, the “heart of the work” was still in Battle Creek, Michigan. That's where you could find the General Conference, the Review and Herald, Battle Creek College, and the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

But all was not well in Battle Creek, nor with many of the men of authority in the denomination. One of many who were in spiritual decline at the time was John Harvey Kellogg.

Continue with notes on next page

A Different Prophet, a Different Issue

“The work in Chicago was presented in a vision given to me at midday. It laid upon me a burden which none could understand. I could not understand it. I was overwhelmed with the things presented.

“When I came to myself, I was like one stunned. Night after night the picture was before me. I saw the investments you were making, the money you were consuming....

“‘Sister White,’ you bemoan, ‘somebody has set things before you in a wrong light.’ No, no; things that no one knows have been presented to me.

Out of his annoyance with those who had opposed his work in Medical Missionary lines, Kellogg had taken upon himself the task of proving that he was correct; that he could do more work and better work than all the ministers of the church combined.

He had begun to “neglect the very work God” had given him, and had instead taken up a work of his “own devising.” (Letter 33, 1900, pp. 2, 8 [Feb. 27, 1900]) 2MR, 241

Ellen White could not sit idly by...

CLICK

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“I have been made to understand the ambitious projects that have bound up in one wicked city means which should have helped the work in this new world and put us on standing-ground. But all the necessities of this field, which were kept before you, seemed to you of less importance than the great things you were creating....

“Should you carry out your own way, means would be drawn from the treasury to support the enterprises of your creation, until the missions to which God has appointed a special work would be destitute of every facility for carrying on that work.”

—Manuscript Releases, vol. 4, 141, 144

Kellogg’s “Medical Missionary Work” had started out well, but when he became determined to make a great showing for himself through a single focus on the slums of Chicago, his efforts became seriously imbalanced, and very expensive. As a result, the growth of the church in the rest of North America, Australia, and South Africa had been seriously hampered.

This was the situation when, in the spring of 1899, Ellen White was shown in vision “an expensive building in the city of Chicago, used for various lines of medical missionary work.” (*Paulson Collection*, 50)

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“At the time that I saw this representation, scenes that would soon take place in Chicago, and other large cities also, passed before me. As wickedness increased, and the protecting power of God was withdrawn, there were destructive winds and tempests; buildings were destroyed by fire and shaken down by earthquakes. I saw the expensive building above referred to fall, with many others.”

—Paulson Collection, 50

Alarmed at the loss of this expensive building, Ellen White “wrote [Dr. Kellogg] immediately in regard to the matter.” (*Paulson Collection, 50*)

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“Judge Arthur and his wife spent part of a day at my home. We had much pleasant and profitable conversation. Among other things discussed was the matter of the representation that had been given me of an expensive building in the city of Chicago, used for various lines of medical missionary work. I related how that when I was in Australia, I was shown a large building in Chicago, which, in its erection and equipment, cost a large amount of money. And I was shown the error of investing means in any such buildings in our cities.

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It was this letter that would be used against the prophet.

Unknown to her, no such building had ever been built in Chicago, and Dr. Kellogg found this a convenient excuse to reject her counsel and undermine others' faith in the Spirit of Prophecy.

For three years, the mystery remained unsolved. And then in June 1902...

CLICK

A Different Prophet, a Different Issue

“As I related some of these matters, and described the building that had been shown me, Judge Arthur said: ‘I can tell you something in regard to that building. A plan was drawn up for the erection of just such a building in Chicago. It seemed necessary to our work. It would have cost considerable money. Brother William Loughborough of Battle Creek, drew up the plans, and several men occupying responsible positions in the medical work met together to consider the matter. Various locations were considered. One of the plans discussed was very similar to what you have described.’

This new information helped clear up much of the perplexity in Ellen White’s mind about the instruction she had received.

In time, the Lord gave further clarification:

A Different Prophet, a Different Issue

“Some time after this, I was shown that the vision of buildings in Chicago and the draft upon the means of our people to erect them, and their destruction, was an object lesson for our people, warning them not to invest largely of their means in property in Chicago, or any other city, unless the providence of God should positively open the way and plainly point out duty to build or buy as necessary in giving the note of warning. A similar caution was given in regard to building in Los Angeles. Repeatedly I have been instructed that we must not invest means in the erection of expensive buildings in cities.”

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Dr. Kellogg, however, was not in a good mood for “object lessons,” “warnings,” and “cautions.”

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“When you received my letter, you were perplexed, and you said, ‘some one has misinformed Sister White regarding our work.’ But no mortal man had ever written to me or told me that this building had been put up. It was presented to me in vision.

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“At the time when the vision was given, influences were working for the erection of such a building. The message was received in time to prevent the development of the plans and the carrying out of the project.

“You should have had discernment to see that the Lord worked in this matter. The very feature of the message that perplexed you should have been received as an evidence that my information came from a higher source than human lips.

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“But instead, you have over and over again related your version of the matter, saying that someone must have told me a falsehood.”

—Paulson Collection, 50, 51

Of course, Dr. Kellogg’s point wasn’t that someone had told Ellen White a falsehood; it was that she had *believed* a falsehood and written it out as a *testimony*.

In other words, Ellen White’s inspiration was a myth. She was just plain wrong and John Kellogg was right.

As you may imagine, some people believed Kellogg, and some people believed Ellen White. What no one seems to have noticed was that the whole episode was an “object lesson for our people.”

And the point of the lesson...

“Some time after this, I was shown that the vision of buildings in Chicago and the draft upon the means of our people to erect them, and their destruction, was an object lesson for our people

So let's go back to that statement, and see if we can find anything of interest.

CLICK

And the point of the lesson...

“Some time after this, I was shown that the vision of buildings in Chicago and the draft upon the means of our people to erect them, and their destruction, was an object lesson for our people, warning them not to invest largely of their means in property in Chicago, or any other city, unless the providence of God should positively open the way and plainly point out duty to build or buy as necessary in giving the note of warning.

Well, this is a point that the Spirit of Prophecy makes time and again in many different places and settings.

I'd be willing to argue that we haven't followed this counsel as faithfully as we should have, and I do think it's important. But it's not a unique piece of counsel, and it doesn't strike me as significant enough to merit three years of perplexity on the prophet's part.

Nor would it seem like a “fair trade” on God's part in exchange for all the trouble Dr. Kellogg caused with his “she believed a lie” argument. So let's keep looking...

And the point of the lesson...

“Some time after this, I was shown that the vision of buildings in Chicago and the draft upon the means of our people to erect them, and their destruction, was an object lesson for our people, warning them not to invest largely of their means in property in Chicago, or any other city, unless the providence of God should positively open the way and plainly point out duty to build or buy as necessary in giving the note of warning. **A similar caution was given in regard to building in Los Angeles.**”

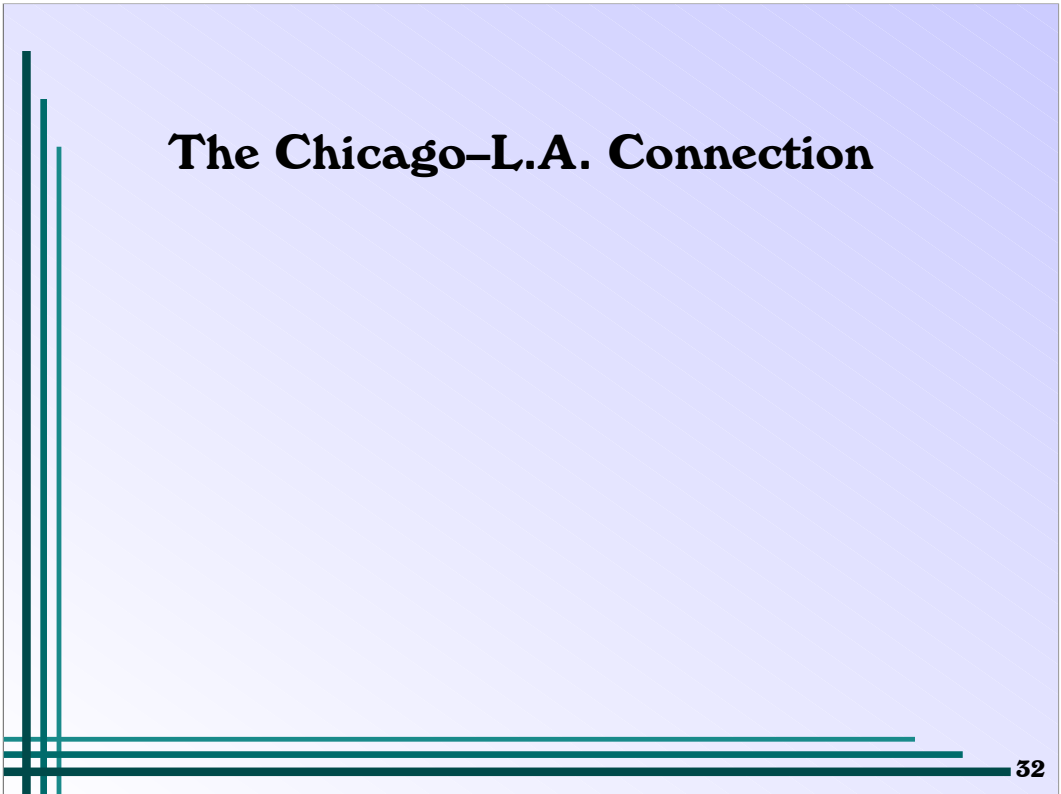
—*Paulson Collection, 50*

Well, this is interesting. Chicago is a long way from L.A. Is there any connection between these two cities that makes this significant?

At the risk of killing all the suspense...

Yes, there is a significant link, but it doesn't seem to have been noticed much. Certainly not at the time.

So let's go there now...



The Chicago–L.A. Connection

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Again, we need to understand a little history for this next information to make sense.

You may recall that, several slides back, we read Ellen White's account of how she first learned that there had been plans to put up a building like she had seen in vision.

This happened in June of 1902. The person who told her the story about the plans for this building was Judge Jesse Arthur, a lawyer and former judge from Michigan who had joined the church some years earlier. As a lawyer, he had provided legal assistance to the church and the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

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During a short series of meetings that Judge Arthur had attended out at St. Helena, he had been especially blessed by Ellen White's sermons, and seems to have had a quite favorable attitude toward her when, just after those meetings, he and his wife visited with Ellen White and her son, Willie.

After hearing the story of the building plans, Willie asked the judge if he could write out the details of the episode, and Judge Arthur agreed to do so. His letter was written August 27, 1902.

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The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“My Dear Brother White:

“I find it possible at this time to make for you the long-promised statement in reference to the action of the Board of Trustees of the American Medical Missionary College in the spring and early summer of 1899, looking to the erection of a large medical college building in the city of Chicago. The facts are as follows:

Anyway, that’s the background to this letter of explanation written by Judge Arthur.

CLICK

The Chicago-L.A. Connection

“During the last of May, 1899, Dr. A. B. Olsen, who was then Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the American Medical Missionary College, prompted by Dr. Bayard Holmes of Chicago, urged upon the Board the necessity of the Medical College becoming a member of the Association of American Medical Colleges in order to give it an assured standing and position among the medical institutions of this and other countries.

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“In furtherance of this object, Dr. Olsen was appointed a delegate to attend a meeting of such Association which was shortly afterwards (sic) to take place in the city of Columbus, Ohio, and make application in behalf of our medical college for membership. This he did, and such application was laid over to be acted upon at the next regular meeting to take place a year from that time.

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“Upon Dr. Olsen’s return, he reported that the principal objection urged against admitting our medical college to membership was the want of a suitable building in the city of Chicago. It was then determined by the Board to take steps at once looking toward the erection of such building. A building committee was appointed and consisted of A. B. Olsen, W. K. Kellogg, and myself. Dr. Olsen was chosen secretary of such committee and I selected chairman.

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“The committee met and immediately formulated plans for the purchase of a site and the erection of such a building. I was instructed as chairman of the committee to open negotiations looking either to the sale or mortgaging of No. 28 thirty-third Place which the College owned, and otherwise taking steps to raise the necessary funds to purchase the site and erect the building contemplated. Dr. Olsen was instructed to procure suitable plans for the College building, which he did. The cost of the site and improvements was to be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$100,000 or possibly more.

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“The committee went to Chicago, looked over several sites, and finally settled upon one on Thirteenth Street, and negotiations were opened for its purchase.

“All this took place while Dr. J. H. Kellogg was absent from the United States in Europe. After our plans were quite well completed for the going on of the work, it was thought advisable to await Dr. Kellogg’s return to this country before proceeding further with the matter.

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“I learned through others that after the Doctor did return and was advised of what had been done, that he discouraged going on with the project. Just what reasons he assigned for doing so I don’t think I ever knew.”

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Well, I don’t want to make Judge Arthur look foolish or anything, but I know why Kellogg discouraged the project: He’d received a letter from Ellen White about an expensive building in Chicago!

There’s another document that sheds some light on this as well. It’s the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the American Medical Missionary College that was held on June 19, 1899.

The American Medical Missionary College was Kellogg’s medical school that operated in conjunction with the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

{Quotation above is from *A Response to an Urgent Testimony From Mrs. Ellen G. White*, 33–35. Often referred to as “the Blue Book,” this is an attack on the Spirit of Prophecy, and deserves no publicity.}

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“The meeting was opened by prayer by Dr. H. F. Rand. Dr. Olsen then made a brief statement of his visit to the meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges and stated that the [application from the] American Medical Missionary College was not voted upon at the meeting, but action was deferred until another year. He then emphasized the importance of securing a suitable building for the College to be located in Chicago; he stated he believed that this would aid greatly in putting the College on a favorable basis before the world and secure a desirable recognition.

The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“[Dr. Olsen said] that it should be remembered that the chief reason why the Board of Health of Illinois did not recognize our school fully was because it had not a suitable building for clinical work and instruction.”

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So it turns out that the building that never was built, the one that Kellogg used as his favorite attack on Ellen White for many years afterward, was a pretty specific item. It was supposed to provide for “clinical work and instruction.”

What sort of a building would this be? It seems to have been something familiar to both the Illinois Board of Health, and the Association of American Medical Colleges. But what, exactly, would it have been? And what connection does it have to Los Angeles?

{Quotation above is from *A Response to an Urgent Testimony From Mrs. Ellen G. White*, 41, 42. Often referred to as “the Blue Book,” this is an attack on the Spirit of Prophecy, and deserves no publicity.}

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“By this time [1912] it had become evident to all concerned that a clinical hospital was needed to provide the advanced classes of medical students with the practical experience necessary to meet all the requirements for graduation....

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The only answer to these questions seems to be found in the experience of denominational leaders about thirteen years later. The best account of this comes from D.E. Robinson’s classic book, *The Story of Our Health Message*.

CLICK

Now, it should be noted that the “requirements” spoken of here were *not* dictated by state law. The “requirements” in question were those of the Association of American Medical Colleges. That’s the educational branch of the American Medical Association, and the same folks who had been talking to the administrators of Kellogg’s medical college thirteen years before. But on with the quote...

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“Loma Linda and its environs did not have population enough to supply such a clinical hospital with the required number of patients. So, in looking around for an area that could serve the need, the eyes of some of the brethren turned toward the city of Los Angeles.

“However, it was remembered that in 1901 Mrs. White had received instruction ‘that it would be a mistake to establish a sanitarium within the city limits’ of Los Angeles. Would the establishment of a clinical hospital in that city... be a move contrary to that counsel?

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“It was felt by some of the brethren that the testimony of 1901 had reference to ‘a sanitarium,’ and not to a clinical hospital such as the needs of the medical college now required.”

—The Story of Our Health Message, 398

As a result of their deliberations on this issue, the leaders of the denomination, and the leaders of the College of Medical Evangelists, decided to follow the advice of the AAMC and build a 200-bed hospital in downtown Los Angeles. In time, it was named the Ellen G. White Memorial Hospital.

This was a major turning point for our Medical Missionary work. This decision, more than any other, linked us to the practices, procedures, mindset, and even the goals of the American Medical Association.

I have found no evidence that those involved in this decision saw any application of the “object lesson” that had cost Ellen White so dearly.

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The Chicago–L.A. Connection

“It was felt by some of the brethren that the testimony of 1901 had reference to ‘a sanitarium,’ and not to a clinical hospital such as the needs of the medical college now required.”

—The Story of Our Health Message, 398

The accusation that Ellen White was mistaken about the building in Chicago is still current today. It can be found on any “anti-Adventist, anti-Ellen White” website that’s worth its salt.

The question now is, “What’s the Payoff?” In the case of Jesus’ comment about the temple of His body, when understanding finally came to His disciples it was for many of them “conclusive evidence of His divinity.” The payoff made the pain worthwhile.

So... is there a similar payoff in the case of the Chicago building vision? Or is it all simply a historical curiosity? Does it mean anything to us? And if it does, what can we, what *should* we do about it?