

enunciator to either draw people away from or toward God and His revealed will. Since these tests require the perspective of time, no such predictive prophecy should be accepted immediately upon enunciation, or prior to its attestation as coming from God.

But suppose a person claims to be giving prophecy, not in the sense of supernatural disclosure of new truth concerning future realities (i.e., predictive truth), but in the sense of supernatural disclosure of new truth concerning present realities (i.e. non-predictive truth)? How shall such a claim be evaluated and tested?

(Lest the very concept of evaluation and testing be viewed as rationalistic, skeptical, unspiritual, and fleshly, John's exhortation in I John 4:1 should be recalled: "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.")

At least part of the answer to this question must lie in our concept of the sufficiency of Scripture. Is Scripture sufficient to make human beings wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus? Is Scripture sufficient to equip the child of God for faith and life? Does it contain everything needful and profitable for "teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness" so that the believer may be complete, "thoroughly equipped for every good work." (II Tim. 3:16-17)?

Or do believers need some additional word from God, something more directly applicable to their immediate and peculiar circumstances, needs, desires, and problems? Do they need something further, something fresh, something new, something that promises to satisfy their craving for present relevance and novelty?

Believers are urged to read and study the written Word of God because the entrance of that Word brings light. That Word is called a lamp to their feet and a light to their path. Believers pray that the Spirit will open their eyes and illumine their minds in order that they may behold wondrous things out of His law. And some believers who have studied the written Word of God for many years, and have found that it is an inexhaustible treasure of heavenly wisdom and knowledge, still pray that more light will break forth from that Word. But is it enough? Or do they really need something further?

Since claims to individual, private revelations tend to be subjective, experience-oriented, and susceptible to ambiguity of interpretation; and since they contain indefinite, ambiguous statements or predictions virtually impossible to verify; the question must be asked: should such "prophecies" be invested with belief or acted upon by anyone (including the alleged prophets)? The above considerations would lead us to answer this question in the negative!