

## Ellen's Longest Vision

When Ellen Harmon, who later became Ellen G. White, first began to receive visions from God, there were very few Advent believers, and they lived mostly in the northeastern part of America. God gave her "open visions" where people could see her having the experience, so their faith would be strong and they would know that God had chosen her to be His special messenger.

At Dorchester, just south of Boston, Massachusetts, Otis Nichols lived on a comfortable farm. His big farmhouse had become a center for the Advent believers in the Boston area. Today he would drive his horse and carriage up to Boston and bring back Ellen Harmon and her sister, Sarah. He had invited them to spend a few days in his home. Ellen always brought courage to the little groups of Adventists who loved Jesus and longed for Him to come.

While Otis Nichols drove along the road he thought about two men in Boston who did not believe that Ellen's visions were from God. These two had been going among the believers, speaking against Ellen and telling everyone that the visions came from the devil. They had never seen her have a vision, but they both declared that Ellen would never dare to have a vision in their presence.

When Otis Nichols invited the Harmon girls to come and stay with his family for a few days, he hoped that the two men, Sargent and Robbins, would be able to get acquainted with Ellen and see that her visions had nothing devilish about them.

He met the girls and took them to his home. They talked about good things, Bible promises, the love of Jesus and all the new believers who were coming to the meetings. Otis Nichols could see that Ellen seemed full of praise to God and great joy in serving Him. "Surely this humble, gentle girl is God's child," Otis Nichols told himself. "Surely her visions are from Him."

Not long after the two girls had come, Otis Nichols looked out the window. A carriage had driven into the yard. He hurried out and saw that Sargent and Robbins had come. They greeted him with big smiles. "We have come to visit with you and we would like to spend the night here."

Otis Nichols felt a thrill of joy. "Oh, that's good!" he said as he stood close to the side of the carriage. "I'm really glad you have come. Ellen and Sarah Harmon have just come and now you can meet them and get acquainted with them."

The two men looked surprised and glanced sharply at each other. "We have another person to visit," Sargent explained. They made no move to get down from the carriage.

But Otis Nichols didn't want them to go. "You just told me that you will stay here tonight. You have wanted to see Ellen for so long, and now is your chance. It may be a long time before you get to see her again and hear her speak." But Sargent and Robbins would not go in.

Otis Nichols asked, "Well, could Ellen give her message at the meeting in Boston, and you could hear her there?"

"Yes," they replied, "that would be fine. Come to Boston next Sabbath. We would like the privilege of hearing her." The two men drove away in a great hurry.

"Now, why did they act that way?" Otis Nichols asked himself while he walked back to the house. He remembered that these men had told the Adventist believers that Ellen would never dare to have a vision in their presence. Could it be that they were afraid of her?

The evening before they were to go to Boston, Ellen had a vision there in the Nichols' home. In the morning she told Otis Nichols, "The Lord showed me three things last night. First, we are not to go to Boston. Second, we are to go to Randolph instead. Third, when we get there we will know why."

"But Randolph is thirteen miles (21 kilometers) in the opposite direction," he exclaimed. "I can't understand that!"

"I don't understand either," Ellen said. "The Lord says that He has work for me to do there."

So Otis Nichols hitched up his horse and they started for Randolph. "I don't know what those people will think when we promised to meet them in Boston today and now we go south to Randolph, instead of north to Boston." All that long drive he fretted about the matter. Ellen sat quietly without saying a word. At last they drove up to the Thayer home, where the Adventist believers were meeting.

They knocked on the door, and when Mrs. Thayer opened it, they saw that the meeting had already begun, and the man in charge of the service turned to face them. Sargent!!! Otis Nichols glanced quickly over the little company and saw Robbins. So that's why God had sent them here!

He saw the whole deception clearly. These men did not want to meet Ellen or have anything to do with her, but God had directed her to come here. Faith began to strengthen in Otis Nichol's heart.

Sargent tried to continue his sermon, but he became so confused that he finally said, "We will close this meeting a little early. Come back after lunch and we will have a good time together."

No one left. Sargent and Robbins had been telling the believers that Ellen's visions came from Satan. They also claimed great holiness for themselves and said over and over that Ellen would never have a vision when they were present. Everyone felt curious to see what would happen. Most of them had been confused by Sargent and Robbins's talk and didn't know what to think.

The afternoon meeting began with singing and prayer. Then suddenly Ellen began to have a vision. Otis Nichols and all the others heard her say, "Glory to God! Glory to God!" God was giving her a vision.

Sargent and Robbins looked wildly around in great distress. Ellen was having a vision right here in front of them, a thing they had declared could never happen. She began to speak. She mentioned the two men's names. Sargent said, "Let's sing!" So they sang very loudly until their voices grew hoarse.

Then Robbins said, "Let's read the Bible!" So they read the Bible in a loud voice until they were exhausted. Their hands shook. Sweat stood out on their faces. Some of the people asked them to be quiet, but Robbins said, "You are bowing to an idol. You are worshiping a golden calf."

The vision had lasted about three hours by this time, and Ellen knew nothing of what went on in the room. Her mind and heart had entered into the presence of Jesus, so all the noise that Sargent and Robbins made did not disturb her.

Then Mr. Thayer, the owner of the house where they had gathered, said, "I have heard that visions from Satan can be stopped by laying a Bible on the person who is having the vision." He picked up the large family Bible from the living room table and held it out toward Sargent. "Here, you lay it on her."

"Oh no!" the pale and frightened man backed away.

"Then I'll do it myself!" Mr. Thayer opened the big Bible and laid it on Ellen's chest as she was lying inclined against the wall. When the Bible touched her, she rose to her feet, picked up the Bible, holding it in one hand and held it as high as she could reach. Then with her eyes looking up and away from the Bible, she said, "This is the inspired testimony from God."

She began to turn its pages with gentle reverence. Then she placed her finger on a verse and quoted the words in a strong, clear voice. For some time she continued to turn pages, point to verses, and quote them with the Book still held high above her head.

People wanted to know if Ellen was pointing to the verses she was quoting. Perhaps Otis Nichols brought a chair and stood on it, so he could read the verses. Others also looked at the passages she was quoting. In every case she spoke the exact words of whatever text on which her finger rested.

Now, a solemn hush had fallen over the little company. These were not just random texts, but every one had something to do with the believers, the false claims of Sargent and Robbins, and the loving care of the Lord Jesus over all of them. Otis Nichols could see that the sweet Spirit of God had touched hearts.

Then the vision ended, and Ellen looked around with surprise. Candles had been lighted. Evening had fallen. She had spent the whole of that winter afternoon in vision, the longest that God ever gave her—nearly four hours!

Sargent and Robbins were defeated. They had not been able to prevent Ellen's having a vision right in the room where they were sitting. They heard her inspired words and saw her hold the heavy Bible above her head for a long time. They saw her point to the texts and heard her quote them correctly.

Otis Nichols had no more doubts. He had seen and felt the power of God and seen His miraculous doings. The believers in the Boston area had received a great refreshing. The power of Sargent and Robbins's influence had been broken and their claims of holiness and sinlessness had been revealed to be only deception. And God strengthened and protected the believers through young Ellen's prophetic ministry.

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