

“FROM VISION TO PRINTED PAGE”

Jim Nix, White Estate

V. MRS. WHITE’S USE OF LITERARY SOURCES, OR WHY SHE BORROWED FROM OTHER AUTHORS.

Ellen White’s own explanation given in the “Introduction” to *Great Controversy*.

The great events which have marked the progress of reform in past ages are matters of history, well known and universally acknowledged by the Protestant world; they are facts which none can gainsay. This history I have presented briefly, in accordance with the scope of the book, and the brevity which must necessarily be observed, the facts having been condensed into as little space as seemed consistent with a proper understanding of their application. In some cases where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted, but in some instances no specific credit has been given, since the quotations are not given for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject. In narrating the experience and views of those carrying forward the work of reform in our own time, similar use has been made of their published works.—*The Great Controversy*, “Introduction,” pp. xi, xii.

A. To help her express well what she had seen in vision.

With only three grades of formal schooling, she found that reading widely aided her. She was on the alert for clearer and better expressions to use in the composition of her articles and books. Had her thoughts been ordinary ones, she might have had a far easier time writing them out. But in vision she had been shown, for example, the pathos of the Cross, and found herself in anguish to find the best words with which to communicate the utter depths of meaning and feeling with which she had been inspired. When she found phrases in other Christian writers that helped her toward expressing what she felt, she was grateful. W. C. White states:

In the writing of her books, she has sometimes found it very difficult and laborious to put into language the scenes presented to her; and when she has found in the language of another a correct representation of the thought presented to her, she has sometimes copied sentences and paragraphs,—feeling that it was her privilege to utilize the correct statements of other writers, of the scenes that have been presented to her.—W. C. White to J. J. Gorrell, May 13, 1904. Quoted in R. W. Olson, *101 Questions*, p. 71.

B. She borrowed historical, geographical and chronological details not revealed to her in vision.

W. C. White to L. E. Froom, Dec. 13, 1934.

In some of the historical matters such as are brought out in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and in *Acts of the Apostles* and in *Great Controversy*, the main outlines were made very clear and plain to her, and when she came to write up these topics, she was left to study the Bible and history to get dates and geographical relations and to perfect her description of details.—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 462.

W. C. White to L. E. Froom, January 8, 1928.

The great events occurring in the life of our Lord were presented to her in panoramic scenes as also were the other portions of *The Great Controversy*. In a few of these scenes chronology and geography were clearly presented, but in the greater part of the revelation the flashlight scenes, which were exceedingly vivid, and the conversations and the controversies, which she heard and was able to narrate, were not marked geographically or chronologically, and she was left to study the Bible and history, and the writings of men who had presented the life of our Lord to get the chronological and geographical connection.

Another purpose served by the reading of history and the *Life of Our Lord* and the *Life of St. Paul*, was that in so doing there was brought vividly to her mind scenes presented clearly in vision, but which were through the lapse of years and her strenuous ministry, dimmed in her memory.

Many times in the reading of Hanna, Farrar, or Fleetwood, she would run on to a description of a scene which had been vividly presented to her, but forgotten, and which she was able to describe more in detail than that which she had read.—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, pp. 459, 460.

W. C. White to W. W. Eastman, November 4, 1912.

When writing out the chapters for *Great Controversy*, she sometimes gave a partial description of an important historical event, and when her copyist who was preparing the manuscripts for the printer, made inquiry regarding time and place, Mother would say that those things are recorded by conscientious historians. Let the dates used by those historians be inserted. At other times in writing what had been presented to her, Mother found such perfect descriptions of events and presentations of facts and of doctrines written out in our denominational books, that she copied the words of these authorities.

When *Controversy* was written, Mother never thought that the readers would take it as authority on historical dates or use it to settle controversy regarding details of history, and she does not now feel that it should be used in that way. Mother regards with great respect the work of those faithful historians who devoted years of time to the study of God's great plan as presented in the prophecy, and outworking of that plan as recorded in history.—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 447.

Marian Davis to C. H. Jones, November 23, 1896.

Transposition of chapters.

In the order of chapters we followed Andrews' Harmony, as given in his *Life of Christ*. He is generally regarded as the very best authority, and is quoted by leading writers. We know of no better arrangement than his.—White Estate correspondence file.

The actual name of Andrews' book which the chronology in *The Desire of Ages* followed was Samuel Andrews' *Life of our Lord*.

Ellen G. White to Edson and Willie White, Dec. 22, 1885.

Tell Mary to find me some histories of the Bible that would give me the order of events. I have nothing and can find nothing in the library here.—*Letter 38, 1885.*

Ellen White found the reading of historical works helpful. W. C. White's statement before the General Conference Fall Council, Oct. 30, 1911.

Mother has never claimed to be authority on history. The things which she has written out, are descriptions of flashlight pictures and other representations given her regarding the actions of men, and the influence of these actions upon the work of God for the salvation of men, with views of past, present, and future history in its relation to this work. In connection with the writing out of these views, she has made use of good and clear historical statements to help make plain to the reader the things which she is endeavoring to present. When I was a mere boy, I heard her read D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation* to my father. She read to him a large part, if not the whole, of the volumes. She has read other histories of the Reformation. This has helped her to locate and describe many of the events and the movements presented to her in vision. This is somewhat similar to the way in which the study of the Bible helps her to locate and describe the many figurative representations given to her regarding the development of the great controversy in our day between truth and error.—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 437.

W. C. White's sermon in Takoma Park, Maryland, Dec. 17, 1905.

One Sabbath, at Basel, as I was reading Wylie's *History of Protestantism*, telling about the experience of the Roman armies coming against the Hungarians [Bohemians], and how a large body of persecutors would see a little body of Protestants, and become frightened, and beat a hasty retreat. As I read it to Mother, she interrupted me, and told me a lot of things in the

pages ahead, and told me many things not in the book at all. She said, "I never read about it, but that scene has been presented to me over and over again. I have seen the papal armies, and sometimes before they had come in sight of the Protestants, the angels of God would give them a representation of large armies, that would make them flee."

I said, "Why did you not put it into your book?" [*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4.] She said, "I did not know where to put it."—W. C. White Talk at Takoma Hall, Takoma Park, Maryland, December 17, 1905.

The following example of a vision that lacked chronological setting occurred in Australia at the time Avondale College was being established.

One morning after I had asked Mother if she had anything new for us, she said, "What are you doing in your Board meeting? What kind of a time are you having?" I answered, I do not need to tell you; the Lord can tell you what you need to know, better than I can, and I might not tell it impartially. She said, "Willie White, you tell me what you are doing." I asked why. Then she said, "It is presented to me that you are having a hard time, and when you reach a certain point, I am to have something to say. I want to know if you have reached that point." Mother, I said, we are having a hard time, but for several reasons I did not want to tell you about it. Then she insisted, and I told her the best I could from my stand point about the status of our work. When I had finished she said, "That is all right. I do not believe I will go to-day, but I think you are getting pretty near to the point when I must come over and bear my testimony." In a day or two she came over and told us what had been presented to her.—W. C. White's Sermon, "The Integrity of the Testimonies to the Church," Lincoln, Nebraska, Nov. 25, 1905, pp. 15, 16.

Report of Don McAdams' research on one portion of *The Great Controversy* manuscript.

About half the rough draft is entirely Mrs. White's own work, with no debts to James Wylie or other historians. These portions of the manuscript deal with the cosmic significance of earthly history, quite literally the great controversy between Christ and Satan. There is, for example, an extended comparison of the deaths of Huss and Christ. None of this material was included in the final draft of *Great Controversy*. In short, McAdams found that "the only completely original part of the manuscript was all cut out and in fact has never appeared in print anywhere."

Most of the remainder of the rough draft is simply copied from Wylie, in many cases word for word. In two instances Mrs. White notes the specific page from which she is working. "Insert page 148 paragraph on second column," she notes parenthetically at one point. Mrs. White's contribution was to abridge Wylie's material, reducing 33 pages of Wylie to 14 in *Great Controversy*.

The rough draft was later polished considerably, probably by Marian Davis, Mrs. White's literary assistant, so that the final version of the Huss story appeared in graceful paraphrase of Wylie, rather than simple, direct borrowing. A few new paragraphs from Wylie which had

not been used in the rough draft appeared in the printed version, added apparently by Miss Davis in the late stages of editing.

McAdams' work shows beyond cavil that Wylie was the source for the historical details in the Huss narrative. It is also reasonable to believe, as McAdams does, "that not all of the historical events described in *Great Controversy* were first seen in vision by Ellen White."—Eric Anderson, "Ellen White and Reformation Historians," *Spectrum*, vol. 9, no. 3, p. 26.

Veltman's conclusions about Ellen White's use of sources vs. her secretaries doing the borrowing.

As we carefully studied the nature and degree of literary dependency, which included Ellen Whites' personal journals, it became very clear to us that it was Ellen White herself who was copying from the sources. We need not look to the work of her secretaries to account for the source parallels found in her writings.—Fred Veltman, "*The Desire of Ages* Project: the Data," *Ministry*, October, 1990, pp. 6, 7.

I found no evidence to indicate that Marian Davis was involved in the original composition of any Ellen White text. But without the original manuscripts it is difficult to prove that such did not happen with any portion of the text of *The Desire of Ages*.—"The Desire of Ages Project: the Conclusions." *Ministry*, December, 1990, p.14.

Specific historical question not settled by Ellen White's books.

We will make a great mistake if we lay aside historical research, and endeavor to settle historical questions by the use of Mother's books as an authority when she herself does not wish them to be used in any such way.—W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, Nov. 4, 1912, White Estate Document File, no. 65.

Ellen White borrowed more than just historical details.

The material borrowed by Mrs. White included historical, geographical, and chronological information as well as devotional reflection, theological concepts . . . and scriptural and prophetic expositions. She also employed extra-Biblical comments on the lives of various Biblical characters, often turning the speculations and conjectures of her sources into statements of positive fact.—Ron Graybill, *E.G. White's Literary Work: An Update*, 1981, p. 11.

Ellen White's concern over "reality" may also be noted in the lack of supposition and probability in her statements. When in reference to the life of Christ, His viewpoint, or that of His disciples, the source uses such expressions as "we can imagine," "it may be supposed," or "no doubt," Ellen White will use a positive expression

[Although she] does not comment on all aspects of a given topic or event . . . what she does treat is handled with a reporter's style. That is to say her account reads as a factual record;

nothing is supposed. Ellen White writes as if she is dealing with realities, whether on earth or beyond the world we see. The reader is not left to imagine anything except what it would have been like to have been in Palestine in the time of Jesus and to have faced the realities she is describing

Whenever her sources used hyperbolic statements, embellished the text with obvious literary expressions, or left the main point to develop some interesting sidelight or curiosity, Ellen White bypassed their comment and stayed with the main storyline and with the essential elements of the background and characterizations. The reader of the *DA* [*Desire of Ages*] is hardly ever conscious of the text itself or impressed with the literary skill of the author. One is caught up with the narrative and its meaning and appeal. This cannot always be said of the sources she used.—Fred Veltman, *Life of Christ Research Project*, pp. 929, 930.

C. At times the Lord led her to the discovery and use of beautiful gems in the works of other authors.

Statement by W. C. White and Does Robinson.

In her early experience when she was sorely distressed over the difficulty of putting into human language the revelations of truths that had been imparted to her, she was reminded of the fact that all wisdom and knowledge comes from God and she was assured that God would bestow grace and guidance. She was told that in the reading of religious books and journals, she would find precious gems of truth expressed in acceptable language, and that she would be given help from heaven to recognize these and to separate them from the rubbish of error with which she would sometimes find them associated.—W. C. White and D. E. Robinson, *Brief Statements Regarding the Writings of Ellen G. White*, p. 5, [June 4, 1981, *Adventist Review*, insert edition].

Additional statement by W. C. White and Does Robinson.

Mrs. White read such books as she considered would be helpful to her in acquiring skill in presenting in clear, forceful language the instruction she had to give. Here was not, however, a case of one void of the thoughts she wished to present, and consulting books for the purpose of finding themes upon which she might write. On the contrary abundant light had been given her and she was looking for helpful and concise forms of expression and for gems of truth tersely expressed. This she did with the divine assurance that she would be guided in distinguishing the true from the false.

In some instances she copied or paraphrased statements that exactly suited her purpose from historians of good repute, especially descriptive passages where she found them to be in exact accord with what had been revealed to her. In some instances these sentences were enclosed in quotation marks and in some instances they were not, especially where she paraphrased the working to better express her thoughts.

Mrs. White's copying from others was not a necessity, but was done chiefly to conserve time in the interests of brevity and forcefulness.—White and Robinson, *Brief Statements*, p. 11, [June 4, 1981, *Adventist Review*, insert edition].

Example: Ellen White paraphrases from J. A. Wylie's description of Lake Zurich in her own personal diary after her visit to the lake.

... We rode out in a rowboat upon the Lake Zurich which was narrow but thirty-five miles long. This gave us a good idea of the extent of Zurich and the many cantons situated on the borders of the lake. Zurich is pleasantly situated on the shores of Lake Zurich. This is a noble expanse of water, enclosed with banks which swell upwards, clothed with vineyards and pine forests, from amid which hamlets and white villas gleam out amid trees and cultivated hills which give variety and beauty to the picture, while in the far off horizon the glaciers are seen blending with the golden clouds. On the right the region is walled in with the craggy rampart of the Abbis [sic] Alps, but the mountains stand back from the shore and by permitting the light to fall freely upon the bosom of the lake and on the ample sweep of its lovely and fertile banks, give a beauty to the picture which pen or brush of the artist could not equal.

The neighboring lake of Zug is in marked contrast to Zurich, the placid waters and slumbering shores seem perpetually wrapped in the shadows.

—E. G. White *Diary*, May 15, 1887, Manuscript 29, 1887, p. 16.

Zurich is pleasantly situated on the shores of the lake of that name. This is a noble expanse of water, enclosed within banks which swell gently upwards, clothed here with vineyards, there with pine-forest, from amid which hamlets and white villas gleam out and enliven the scene, while in the far-off horizon the glaciers are seen blending with the golden clouds. On the right the region is walled in by the craggy rampart of the Albis Alp, but the mountains stand back from the shore, and by permitting the light to fall freely upon the bosom of the lake, and on the ample sweep of its lovely and fertile banks, give a freshness and airiness to the prospect as seen from the city, which strikingly contrasts with

the neighboring Lake of Zug, where the placid waters and the slumbering shore seem perpetually wrapped in the shadows of the great mountains.

—J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, pp. 435, 436.

W. C. White knew the Source of his mother's information. On September 25, 1899, he wrote to F. E. Belden:

It is not necessary that you or Edson [White] or any other person shall give particulars regarding the work at Battle Creek in order to get Mother's counsel as to the course that should be pursued, because the matters which transpire there are laid open before her clearly from time to time. Mother is carrying a very heavy burden regarding the work at Battle Creek, and especially at the Review and Herald, and she is writing frequently to the managers and to the officers of the General Conference, laying out principles and calling attention to dangers.—Quoted in A.L. White, *Ellen G. White, The Australian Years, 1891-1900*, p. 403.

Study of dissimilarities needs to be undertaken as well as similarities.

In the whole question of borrowing, study should be given to differences as well as similarities before conclusions can be definitely drawn. In one study that the White Estate staff at the office in Washington, D.C., undertook, a chapter in *Desire of Ages* was compared with ten books on the life of Christ known to have been in Ellen White's library. Robert Olson did the chapter on the resurrection of Lazarus (chapter 58, "Lazarus Come Forth"). He found no case where more than four or five words could be traced directly to another source.

One discovery he mentions of interest is in the extra biblical account of the return of the messenger who had reported to Jesus on Lazarus' illness. Of the six who make any comment (Abbott, Edersheim, Farrar, Hanna, March, McMillan), they all agree that he returned to Mary and Martha after Lazarus' death. Ellen White is the only one who says that Lazarus was still alive and died later.

It is clear that even when she employed the language of others in their description of an event, she did not just blindly follow everything they said.

A comparison of Ellen G. White and Calvin Stowe.

William S. Peterson asserted that Ellen White took not just fine language and historical information from other authors, but ideas as well. He mentions that Ellen White borrowed not only Calvin Stowe's words; but also his ideas when she wrote *Manuscript 24, 1886*, now published in *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 19-21. (See *Spectrum*, Autumn, 1971, pp. 73-84.) When David Neff was a Seminary student in 1973, he responded to Peterson's assertion with a carefully researched 29-page paper in which he compares and contrasts Stowe and Ellen White line by line and word by word. According to Neff:

We have evidence of her writing most of the ideas which are common to her and Dr. Stowe at a time prior to the writing of this manuscript. Indeed, some of these references antedate any possible awareness on her part of Dr. Stowe's book. In addition to the common theological material, there are several points at which the two authors diverge or have distinctively different emphases. These are of sufficient importance for us to conclude that in writing *Manuscript 24, 1886*, Mrs. White was not "appropriating the ideas of another man."—*Ellen White's alleged Literary and Theological Indebtedness to Calvin Stowe*, p. 25.

Neff's findings fully support Ellen White's position that her basic concepts or ideas came, not from human sources, but from God.—R. W. Olson, *Ellen G. White's Use of Sources*, p. 10, 11.

One example, discovered by David Neff, well illustrates how Ellen White borrowed language from Stowe, but not his preconceptions:

[S] It is not the words of the Bible that were inspired,

[W] *It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired,*

[S] it is not the thoughts of the Bible that were inspired;

[S] it is the men who wrote the Bible that were inspired

[W] *but the men that were inspired.*

[S] Inspiration acts not on the man's words, not on the man's thoughts,

[W] *Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions*

[S] but on the man himself; so that he, by his own spontaneity, under

[W] *but on the man himself who, under*

[S] the impulse of the Holy Ghost, conceives certain thought and gives

[W] *the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts.*

[S] utterance to them in certain words, both the words and thoughts

[W] *But the words*

[S] receiving the peculiar impress of the mind which conceived

[W] *receive the impress of the individual mind*

[S] and uttered them, and being in fact just as really his own, as they could have been if there had been no inspiration at all in the case

[S] Inspiration generally is a purifying, and an elevation, and an intensification of the human intellect subjectively, rather than an objective suggestion and communication; though suggestion and communication are not excluded.

[S] The Divine mind is, as it were, so diffused through the

[W] *The Divine mind is diffused. The Divine*

[S] human, and the human mind is so interpenetrated with the

[W] *mind and will is combined with the human mind and will;*

[S] Divine, that for the time being the utterances of the man

[W] *thus the utterance of man*

[S] are the word of God.

[W] *are the word of God.*

—[S] Calvin E. Stowe, *Origin and History of the Books of the Bible*, 1867. pp. 19-20;

—[W] Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 21

Even this brief comparison shows that while employing Stowe's words, Ellen White does not whole-heartedly agree with his views. She places more emphasis on the Divine aspects of the revelation-inspiration process than does Stowe. He denies thought inspiration; she affirms it.

Fred Veltman's conclusion of how Ellen White used sources in the writing of *The Desire of Ages*:

There is no question that she [Ellen G. White] used sources, but she was selective. She evidently was governed by her own purposes and priorities. The sources were her slaves, never her masters.

To deny her indebtedness to literary sources or to underplay their influence, would in my judgment not be a fair assessment of the evidence But to stress the literary borrowing to such an extent that Ellen White's special contributions as a writer and as a messenger, for the content she wished to communicate, are severely downplayed or denied, is also in my opinion an inaccurate evaluation of the evidence."—Fred Veltman, *Life of Christ Research Project*, p. 933.

D. Ellen White appropriated some of the doctrinal writings of her fellow workers, since they had developed their doctrinal concepts by mutual study.

When tracts and pamphlets were published, the expositions of truth therein presented frequently represented the results of united, concerted study, and the forms of expression by the several writers were very similar and sometimes identical. All felt that the truths to be presented were common property and wherever one could help another or get help from another in the expression of Biblical truths, it was considered right to do so. Consequently there were many excellent statements of present truth copied by one writer from another. And no man said that aught which he wrote was exclusively his own.

In the process of time many things which Sister White wrote and said were used by others without credit, and she in turn when dealing with prophetic exposition or doctrinal statements felt free to use without credit the statements and teachings of leading writers among the pioneers when she found in their writings the exact thought that she wished to present It is in the delineation in prophetic and doctrinal exposition that we find that she used the words of others or had closely paraphrased them.—R. W. Olson, *Brief Statements*, pp. 10, 19.

In her Introduction to *The Great Controversy*, first in 1888 and again in 1911, Ellen White acknowledged her borrowing not only from historians, but also from "those carrying forward the work of reform in our time" (p. xiv). She here appears to have in mind such writers as Uriah Smith, J. N. Andrews, and James White.—R. W. Olson, *101 Questions*, pp. 72, 73.

E. White Estate's inventory of known literary borrowing.

At the main office of the White Estate we have a complete set of Ellen White's published books. In them are marked all the places of which we are currently aware where

something is borrowed or paraphrased from another source. The table that follows shows the percentages found in each book. (*The Desire of Ages* is not included since it was exhaustively examined separately by Dr. Fred Veltman in his seven year study.)

BOOK TITLES IN ORDER OF LITERARY BORROWING PERCENTAGE

<u>Title</u>	<u>Parallel Lines</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<i>of Lines containing at least one word of borrowed material.</i>
Great Controversy, The (In quotes)	3241	15.11	
Great Controversy, The (Uncredited)	1084	5.05	
Sketches From the Life of Paul	1185	12.23	
Steps to Christ	196	6.23	
Acts of the Apostles, The	426	3.05	
Faith and Works	73	2.97	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5	638	2.82	
Messages to Young People	282	2.67	
Patriarchs and Prophets	543	2.28	
Selected Messages, book 1	235	2.03	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4	395	1.88	
Prophets and Kings	242	1.51	
My Life Today	126	1.33	
Life Sketches	58	1.00	
Welfare Ministry	73	.99	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8	82	.97	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3	177	.96	
Fundamentals of Christian Education	159	.91	
Education	71	.88	
Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers	127	.85	
Gospel Workers	99	.81	
Sanctified Life	17	.81	
Christian Service	60	.80	
Counsels on Stewardship	58	.80	
Ministry of Healing, The	98	.78	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7	56	.77	
Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing	26	.68	
Christ's Object Lessons	70	.60	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1	135	.60	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6	61	.51	
Child Guidance	61	.50	
Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students	64	.49	
Counsels on Health	83	.48	
Adventist Home, The	55	.41	
Temperance	25	.37	
Medical Ministry	34	.36	
Counsels to Writers and Editors	14	.34	
Counsels on Sabbath School Work	13	.32	
Evangelism	50	.30	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9	18	.28	
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2	42	.20	
Selected Messages, bk. 2	20	.17	
Early Writings	10	.14	
Counsels on Diet and Foods	15	.11	

= % age of sentences containing even paraphrased material.

Dr. Fred Veltman summarized the literary borrowing that he found in his exhaustive study of fifteen chapters from *The Desire of Ages* as follows: Thirty-one percent had some dependence upon other sources, while sixty-one percent did not. The remaining balance was quotes from Scripture. See *Adventist Review*, September 22, 1988, p. 6.

VI. EXPLODING A MYTH

Ellen White was uneducated and it is a sign of her inspiration that she could write as she did.

It is unfortunate that the myth has grown up that Ellen White was an uneducated person. In terms of formal schooling, it is true that she was uneducated, but then so were Abraham Lincoln and most of his contemporaries, many of whom achieved greatness during their lives because of self-education. Ellen White's experience as a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, her extensive travels to Europe and the South Pacific, as well as over most of the United States, and her extensive reading made her a highly knowledgeable person by nineteenth century standards. Evidence of this can be seen in her popularity as a temperance lecturer among Christian temperance groups, her popularity as a speaker at Adventist gatherings, as well as her extensive writing of articles, books and letters.

Her literary assistants did improve her written materials as we have seen, but the idea that God miraculously transformed a highly uneducated woman into some person with the ability to write a book like *The Desire of Ages* is unfounded. Under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, her abilities were enhanced by her own hard work over the years plus the further assistance of literary assistants.

VII. Conclusion.

Ellen White's own claim about her writings.

In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne. It is true concerning the articles in our papers and in the many volumes of my books.—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 29.

W. C. White's teaching.

Regarding Mother's writings, I have overwhelming evidence and conviction that they are the description and delineation of what God has revealed to her in vision, and where she has followed the description of historians or the exposition of Adventist writers, I believe that God has given her discernment to use that which is correct and in harmony with truth regarding all matters essential to salvation. If it should be found by faithful study that she has followed some expositions of prophecy which in some detail regarding dates we cannot harmonize with

understanding of secular history, it does not influence my confidence in her writings as a whole any more than my confidence in the Bible is influenced by the fact that I cannot harmonize many of the statements regarding chronology.—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, pp. 449, 450.

Warning sounded by W. C. White and Dores Robinson.

Her use of historical matter was a means to the greater end,—to bring into brief form the indisputable facts of history, so as to emphasize the thoughts revealed to her, and to lay the foundation for the understanding of future events. Truly it will be a great misfortune if any reader shall allow the question of her use of some passages from the writings of others, to blind his mind that he cannot appreciate the great truths which are invaluable to the church and the world today.—White and Robinson, *Brief Statements*, p. 12 [June 4, 1981, *Adventist Review*, insert edition].

Fred Veltman's conclusion at the end of his seven-year study of the *Desire of Ages* as stated in the last paragraph of his "Summary and Conclusions" chapter:

If there is one general conclusion generated from my countless hours spent in reading and studying her [Ellen G. White's] writings over the past seven years, it is this: Ellen White was above all a practical believing Christian. Her writings were written to inform and to build personal faith in and personal obedience to God's will as it comes to expression in His Word, the Bible. We may wish with all our hearts that she could serve us today as scientist or psychologist, as technician or theologian, or as conference or college president, but that is not to be. My firm conviction is that she was not nor can she be any of these for us. She was rather a woman of God, drawn by His Spirit to call us back to Himself, to His word and His ways, that living under the name of Christ we might glorify Him before those who know Him not.—Fred Veltman, *Life of Christ Research Project*, pp. 957, 958.

Exhibits Compiled by
James R. Nix
Ellen G. White Estate
Silver Spring, Maryland
Revised, May 19, 1998