

# More About The Secret Writers Charge

**PART ONE OF SIX**

## WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

“If God reproves His people through an individual He does not leave the one corrected to guess at matters and the message to become corrupted in reaching the person it is designed to correct. God gives the message and then takes especial care that it is not corrupted.”—*Letter 8, 1860.*

The charge is being made that Ellen White did not write most of her own books, and those she did write were radically changed by others.

What are the facts in the case?

In this chapter we shall learn that Ellen White fiercely defended her writings from encroachment by would-be rewriters, that God warned her in one instance in which it was attempted, that she was guided to set up and oversee a very careful proofing arrangement, which she continually checked on.

A theory which weakens people’s faith in even part of the Spirit of Prophecy deserves to be examined very carefully. Were we not warned that such attacks would be made? Ellen White warned that Satan would work, through different means, to undermine faith in those books.

“Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious—to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony.”—*Letter 12, 1890.*

A letter recently received from a friend says it well: “My first question was, ‘Did Ellen White say that it is true that others changed her writings?’ I have been told that she supposedly said this to someone who supposedly said it to someone else. But in spite of requesting the statement again and again, no one has been able to produce anything from her pen saying that any unauthorized changes were being made, other than a few by Fannie Bolton, which we will discuss in more detail later in this study.

“To my mind, this is very significant. Ellen White certainly had no problem with speaking out, even in most forceful manner to the top men of the organization. She reproved General Conference presidents again and again. Was she too shy or frightened to protest her own writings being adulterated? Or did she not know? Did she never read what they printed? Did the God who revealed so many secrets to her, fail to reveal to her that others were undermining her writings?

*New Book!*

*New Book!*

## *The Secret Writers Charge*

— BY VANCE FERRELL

***A powerful defense against one of the most devastating and untrue attacks against the Spirit of Prophecy.***

***Part One was mailed out as a tract set a month ago (The Secret Writers Charge [WM-935-936]). Part Two is the material you now have in hand. Part Three and Four will not be reprinted in tract format. Varied material in each of the four parts.***

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“Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious—to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony.”

— *1 Selected Messages, 48*  
[see 2 SM 78 for context]

“Why do we think that we have an accurate Bible today? We have no original documents, only copies of copies. But we believe that the God who inspired the Bible has been able to preserve it for us for the last two thousand years without any change of serious significance. If that is the case, and the Spirit of Prophecy is the inspired Word of God also, has He been unable to preserve it for us for even one hundred fifty years?”

“One thing that is causing confusion is a lack of understanding about how inspiration works. If God gives the prophet the exact words that he is to write or speak, then not even the prophet has the right to change a word.

“But if God gives the prophet the idea to be expressed, and the prophet states that idea in his own words, then the prophet would have the right to change the words (or have someone else correct the grammar of the sentence, with the prophet’s final approval), in order to express the idea more perfectly.”

That provides a fitting introduction for this section. Let us turn our attention to this question of the type of inspiration which the prophet received.

### THOUGHT INSPIRATION, NOT WORD INSPIRATION

Ellen White received complete Inspiration, equal in every way to that received by the Bible Writers. There is no such thing as halfway Inspiration. But how does this Inspiration operate?

In the life and writings of Ellen White, we have before us a laboratory in which to study how divine Inspiration worked in all the prophets which God inspired.

It is clear from reading the Spirit of Prophecy writings, and the Bible as well, that thought Inspiration was the method used. The message is given to the prophet, and he then writes it in his own words.

This is clearly shown in the differences to be found in the four Gospels. It is also evident in the fact that different prophets wrote in different ways and emphasized different things. The concept of thought Inspiration is clearly stated in both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”—*2 Peter 1:21*.

“Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.”—*Review, October 8, 1867*.

“One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of

the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind—a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all.”—*Great Controversy, Introduction, vi*.

“After I come out of vision I do not at once remember all that I have seen, and the matter is not so clear before me until I write, then the scene rises before me as was presented in vision, and I can write with freedom. Sometimes the things which I have seen are hid from me after I come out of vision, and I cannot call them to mind until I am brought before a company where the vision applies, then the things which I have seen come to my mind with force.

“I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing the vision as in having the vision. It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that He is pleased to have me relate or write them.”—*2 Spiritual Gifts, 292-293*.

“I am exceedingly anxious to use words that will not give anyone a chance to sustain erroneous sentiments. I must use words that will not be misconstrued and made to mean the opposite of that which they were designed to mean.”—*Manuscript 126, 1905*.

“Human minds vary. The minds of different education and thought receive different impressions of the same words, and it is difficult for one mind to give to one of a different temperament, education, and habits of thought by language exactly the same idea as that which is clear and distinct in his own mind. Yet to honest men, right-minded men, he can be so simple and plain as to convey his meaning for all practical purposes. If the man he communicates with is not honest and will not want to see and understand the truth, he will turn his words and language in everything to suit his own purposes. He will misconstrue his words, play upon his imagination, wrest them from their true meaning, and then entrench himself in unbelief, claiming that the sentiments are all wrong.

“This is the way my writings are treated by those who wish to misunderstand and pervert them. They turn the truth of God into a lie. In the very same way that they treat the writings in my published articles and in my books, so do skeptics and infidels treat the Bible. They read it according to their desire to pervert, to misapply, to willfully wrest the utterances from their true meaning. They declare that the Bible can prove anything and everything, that every sect proves their doctrines right, and that the most diverse doctrines are proved from the Bible.

“The writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men. These men were inspired of the Holy Spirit. Because of the imperfections of human understanding of language, or the perversity of the human

mind, ingenious in evading truth, many read and understand the Bible to please themselves. It is not that the difficulty is in the Bible. Opposing politicians argue points of law in the statute book, and take opposite views in their application and in these laws.

“The Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations, as God in His providence saw a fitting opportunity to impress man at sundry times and divers places. Men wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. There is ‘first the bud, then the blossom, and next the fruit,’ ‘first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.’ This is exactly what the Bible utterances are to us.

“There is not always perfect order or apparent unity in the Scriptures. The miracles of Christ are not given in exact order, but are given just as the circumstances occurred, which called for this divine revealing of the power of Christ. The truths of the Bible are as pearls hidden. They must be searched, dug out by painstaking effort. Those who take only a surface view of the Scriptures will, with their superficial knowledge, which they think is very deep, talk of the contradictions of the Bible, and question the authority of the Scriptures. But those whose hearts are in harmony with truth and duty will search the Scriptures with a heart prepared to receive divine impressions. The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread. Sharp contentions over the Bible have led to investigation and revealed the precious jewels of truth. Many tears have been shed, many prayers offered, that the Lord would open the understanding to His Word.

“The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes.

“The stamps of minds are different. All do not understand expressions and statements alike. Some understand the statements of the Scriptures to suit their own particular minds and cases. Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ.

“The disciples traveling to Emmaus needed to be disentangled in their interpretation of the Scriptures. Jesus walked with them disguised, and as a man He talked with them. Beginning at Moses and the prophets He taught them in all things concerning Himself, that His life, His mission, His sufferings, His death were just as the Word of God had

foretold. He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. How quickly He straightened out the tangled ends and showed the unity and divine verity of the Scriptures. How much men in these times need their understanding opened.

“The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God’s penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

“It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the Word of God.”—*Manuscript 24, 1886 (1 Selected Messages, 19-21)*.

“There is variety in a tree, there are scarcely two leaves just alike. Yet this variety adds to the perfection of the tree as a whole.

“In our Bible, we might ask, Why need Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Gospels? Why need the Acts of the Apostles, and the variety of writers in the Epistles, go over the same thing?

“The Lord gave His Word in just the way He wanted it to come. He gave it through different writers, each having his own individuality, though going over the same history. Their testimonies are brought together in one Book, and are like the testimonies in a social meeting. They do not represent things in just the same style. Each has an experience of his own, and this diversity broadens and deepens the knowledge that is brought out to meet the necessities of varied minds. The thoughts expressed have not a set uniformity, as if cast in an iron mold, making the very hearing monotonous. In such uniformity there would be a loss of grace and distinctive beauty . . .

“The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the very same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon the different objects gives those objects a different hue.

“Through the inspiration of His Spirit the Lord gave His apostles truth, to be expressed according to the development of their minds by the Holy Spirit. But the mind is not cramped, as if forced

into a certain mold.”—*Letter 53, 1900 (1 Selected Messages, 21-22)*.

“The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. Thus is shown God’s condescension. He meets fallen human beings where they are. The Bible, perfect as it is in its simplicity, does not answer to the great ideas of God; for infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought. Instead of the expressions of the Bible being exaggerated, as many people suppose, the strong expressions break down before the magnificence of the thought, though the penman selected the most expressive language through which to convey the truths of higher education. Sinful beings can only bear to look upon a shadow of the brightness of heaven’s glory.”—*Letter 121, 1901 (1 Selected Messages, 22)*.

“I saw” and “I was shone” are key phrases in the Spirit of Prophecy. Rarely does Ellen White say that the words she is to write are actually dictated to her. The pattern was general thought inspiration, but not word inspiration.

For a number of “I saw” statements, read *Early Writings* again. Here are several examples of “I was shone.”

“In the view given me in Rochester, New York, December 25, 1865, I was shown that the subject of taking usury should be considered by Sabbathkeepers.”—*1 Testimonies, 534*.

“November 5, 1862, I was shown the condition of Brother Hull. He was in an alarming state.”—*1 Testimonies, 426*.

“June 5, 1863, I was shown that Satan is ever at work to dishearten and lead astray ministers whom God has chosen to preach the truth.”—*1 Testimonies, 449*.

“I was shown that Sabbathkeepers as a people labor too hard without allowing themselves change or periods of rest.”—*1 Testimonies, 514*.

“In the vision given me in Rochester, New York, December 25, 1865, I was shown that our Sabbathkeeping people have been negligent in acting upon the light which God has given in regard to health reform.”—*1 Testimonies, 485*.

Thought inspiration was clearly the method used. We will conclude our discussion of this here. But, in the quotations given throughout the remainder of this chapter, you will note that thought inspiration is frequently implied.

Arthur L. White comments on how Ellen White wrote the concepts provided her in vision.

“The matters revealed to Mrs. White in vision were not usually a word-for-word narration of

events with their lessons. They were generally in the nature of rapidly appearing scenes or great panoramic views of various experiences of men, sometimes in the past, sometimes in the future. These views were in many instances accompanied by spoken instruction. At times, the actions and conversations of men in groups, or of churches, of conferences, and of multitudes were revealed to her, with a clear perception of their purposes, aims, and motives. Often divine instruction was given to her regarding the meaning and the use to be made of what was thus revealed.

“When the time came to write out these revelations, Mrs. White would endeavor to trace in human language that which had been opened before her in these heavenly views. No supernatural force took mechanical control of her hand, and guided in the words which she wrote, and very rarely were the exact words which she should use dictated by the heavenly messenger at her side.”—*A. L. White, Messenger to the Remnant, 59-60*.

#### HOW THE WRITINGS WERE PREPARED

“Her first book, *Experience and Views*, published in 1851, was largely a collection of visions which had been previously published in broadsides and periodical articles. The books that followed during the next three decades were written chapter by chapter in their natural development of subject matter.

“Those published during the last half of Ellen White’s ministry were comprised of matter currently written and materials drawn from the reservoir of her writings—periodical articles, early books, pamphlets, manuscripts, and letters. To all these Mrs. White added pertinent passages enriching and rounding out the presentation for the forthcoming book. Thus in her later life she made much use of her earlier writings.”—*T. H. Jemison, A Prophet Among You, 335*.

There were five different ways in which Ellen White was given a basis for what she wrote in her letters, articles, and books.

1 - Sometimes the written material was a direct account of a single vision. This is especially noticeable in her “I saw” passages.

“August 24, 1850, I saw . . .”—*Early Writings, 59*.

2 - At times a composite account of several visions is given.

“From time to time I have been permitted to behold . . .”—*Great Controversy, Introduction, x*.

3 - There were times when she told some of the information given in a vision, without relating the vi-

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Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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sion itself.

“In the night of March 2, 1907, many things were revealed to me regarding the value of our publications . . .”—*9 Testimonies*, 65.

4 - Then there were those instances in which she gave information gleaned from a number of visions.

“In other cases, where individuals have claimed to have messages for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of a similar character, the word has been given me, ‘Believe them not.’”—*Letter 16*, 1893.

5 - On occasion, light was given which could be given to various individuals as the need arose.

“God has given me a testimony of reproof for parents who treat their children as you do your little ones.”—*Letter 1*, 1877.

From his study into this, T. H. Jemison makes this comment:

“At times Ellen White did record specifically revealed words, but generally she described events as they passed rapidly before her, showing scenes of the past and present, and sometimes the future. Frequently words of instruction were spoken in connection with these views. At times she was taken in vision into homes, committee meetings, churches, councils, and conferences. In some of these instances, not only were the actions and words of individuals and groups revealed to her, but also the motives behind their words and actions.

“When she wrote out what had been shown her, Ellen White endeavored to describe in the best manner of which she was capable the things she had seen and heard. Though at times she quoted exactly what she had heard, the writing was not mechanical, nor were the specific words of the complete record dictated. For the most part, the words used were her own, as was true in the case of the Bible writers. God made use of the messenger’s background, education, and experience in bringing to His people the revelation He wanted them to have.”—*T. H. Jemison, A Prophet Among You*, 333.

In the *Introduction to Great Controversy*, Ellen White described how she prepared that book. She here relates the detailed process by which she was given overarching information in visions, found confirmatory historical data, and then put it all together.

“As the Spirit of God has opened to my mind the great truths of His Word, and the scenes of the past

and the future, I have been bidden to make known to others what has thus been revealed,—to trace the history of the controversy in past ages, and especially to so present it as to shed a light on the fast-approaching struggle of the future. In pursuance of this purpose, I have endeavored to select and group together events in the history of the church in such a manner as to trace the unfolding of the great testing truths that at different periods have been given to the world, that have excited the wrath of Satan and the enmity of a world-loving church, and that have been maintained by the witness of those who ‘loved not their lives unto the death’ . . .

“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 except in a few instances no specific credit has been given, since they are not quoted 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.

“It is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing upon coming events. Yet viewed as a part of the controversy between the forces of light and darkness, all these records of the past are seen to have a new significance; and through them a light is cast upon the future, illuminating the pathway of those who, like the reformers of past ages, will be called, even at the peril of all earthly good, to witness ‘for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.’”—*Great Controversy, Author’s Introduction*, vi-vii.

When Ellen White wrote *Spiritual Gifts, Volume 2*, it was an account of her own experiences. She wrote about how she had done this.

“In preparing the following pages, I have labored

under great disadvantages, as I have had to depend in many instances on memory, having kept no journal till within a few years. In several instances I have sent the manuscripts to friends who were present when the circumstances related occurred, for their examination before they were put in print. I have taken great care, and have spent much time, in endeavoring to state the simple facts as correctly as possible. I have, however, been much assisted in arriving at dates by the many letters which I wrote.”—*Preface, 2 Spiritual Gifts.*

In the appendix to the first 400 copies of that book which were printed, she wrote these words:

“A special request is made that if any find incorrect statements in this book they will immediately inform me. The edition will be completed about the first of October; therefore send before that time. Ellen White.”

It is an intriguing fact that, throughout her entire life, Ellen White was very open and candid about her writings. She never made false, exaggerated claims, nor did she attempt to hide her deficiencies. Her life reflected the truthfulness found in her writings.

#### **SHE MADE CHANGES AND AUTHORIZED GRAMMATICAL CORRECTIONS TO BE MADE**

Ellen White did not have much formal education. Especially at first, her English was not very polished and she needed others to correct the grammar in her writings. This work was first done by James White, and later by others. With the passing of years she improved in writing ability. Yet there were always some corrections to be made. These she authorized; and, when they were completed, she read over and approved.

On one occasion, she wrote this:

“This morning I take into candid consideration my writings. My husband is too feeble to help me prepare them for the printer, therefore I shall do no more with them at present. I am not a scholar. I cannot prepare my own writings for the press. Until I can do this I shall write no more. It is not my duty to tax others with my manuscript.”—*Manuscript 3, 1873 (Diary January 10, 1873).*

Later she explained:

“While my husband lived, he acted as a helper and counselor in the sending out of the messages that were given to me. We traveled extensively. Sometimes light would be given to me in the night season, sometimes in the daytime before large congregations. The instruction I received in vision was faithfully written out by me, as I had time and strength for the work. Afterward we examined the matter together, my husband correcting grammatical errors and eliminating needless repetition. Then it was carefully copied for the persons addressed, or for the printer.

“As the work grew, others assisted me in the

preparation of matter for publication. After my husband’s death, faithful helpers joined me, who labored untiringly in the work of copying the testimonies and preparing articles for publication.

“But the reports that are circulated, that any of my helpers are permitted to add matter or change the meaning of the messages I write out, are not true.”—*Letter 225, 1906 (3 Selected Messages, 89).*

Arthur L. White, Ellen White’s grandson, recalls what his father, William C. White, told him:

“It was ever a source of regret to Mrs. White that her schooling had been very brief, and her knowledge of the technical rules of writing were therefore limited. W. C. White says he clearly remembers the earlier years of her work in Battle Creek, when James White, on coming home from the Review and Herald office, would be asked to listen to what Mrs. White had written, and to help her in preparing it technically for publication. Then, as she read to him, he would comment on the matter . . . and would point out weaknesses in composition and faulty grammar.”—*A. L. White, Messenger to the Remnant, 60.*

When she was preparing the *Testimonies*, she wrote:

“During the last nine years, from 1855 to 1864, I have written ten small pamphlets, entitled, *Testimony for the Church*, which have been published and circulated among Seventh-day Adventists. The first edition of most of these pamphlets being exhausted, and there being an increasing demand for them, it has been thought best to re-print them, as given in the following pages, omitting local and personal matters and giving those portions only which are of practical and general interest and importance. Most of *Testimony No. 4* may be found in the second volume of *Spiritual Gifts*, hence, it is omitted in this volume.”—*3 Selected Messages, 95.*

She said that God had instructed her to publish papers and books in the original, rough form, and then polish them later:

“I wish to state some matters, which you can do what you please with. These statements you have heard me make before—that I was shown years ago that we should not delay publishing the important light given me because I could not prepare the matter perfectly. My husband was at times very sick, unable to give me the help that I should have had and that he could have given me had he been in health. On this account I delayed putting before the people that which has been given me in vision.

“But I was shown that I should present before the people in the best manner possible the light received; then as I received greater light, and as I used the talent God had given me, I should have increased ability to use in writing and in speaking. I was to improve everything, as far as possible bringing it to perfection, that it might be accepted by

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intelligent minds.”—3 *Selected Messages*, 96-97.

When she was not pressed by many duties, Ellen White wrote more slowly and carefully. But at other times, she wrote more hurriedly.

“Regarding the handwritten manuscripts that came from her pen, her literary secretaries say that they varied markedly in literary perfection. Usually the original manuscripts written when she was not burdened with travel and preaching, or full of anxieties connected with the conditions of the church, were found to be beautiful, forceful, eloquent in expression, and with very few grammatical imperfections. But not a few of the original manuscripts were written hurriedly when she was perplexed by cares and burdens, laboring under the feeling that the manuscript must be completed quickly. At such times she paid little attention to the rules of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. There was much repetition and faulty grammatical construction. She expected that these matters would be corrected by the copyist.”—A. L. White, *Messenger to the Remnant*, 60.

After the manuscripts were prepared, she read them over:

“I read over all that is copied, to see that everything is as it should be. I read all the book manuscript before it is sent to the printer. So you can see that my time must be fully occupied. Besides writing, I am called upon to speak to the different churches and to attend important meetings. I could not do this work unless the Lord helped me.”—*Letter 133*, 1902.

Prior to the early 1880s, Ellen White did not always have someone living with her who could care for the grammatical proofing of her writings. At such times, the publishing house had to do it. But, each time, they sent the galley proofs back to her for her careful reading prior to final printing.

Here is an example of one time in which she said not to send the proofs back. The book she was referring to was the 1880 edition of *Life Sketches*. At the time, she was traveling in the Far West.

“We have decided to have the printers [at the Review and Herald office in Battle Creek] go on my book and not transport these books across the plains again. Part of the book is here already printed. We shall not have them stereotyped [which would make changes impossible], because we shall not wait to have matters of my book so very, very exact, but get out this first edition and get it in market. Then we can take time to get out a more perfect edition on Pacific Coast and have [it] stereotyped. Then your father’s and my life will be written and printed in the Pacific Printing Office. But we have all used our best judgment and think we had better remain here [in Battle Creek] till December and complete this edition.”—*Letter 45*, 1876.

### THE 1883 CORRECTIONS OF TESTIMONIES, VOLS. 1-4

It was due to Ellen White’s ongoing concern, that her writings be corrected for grammar and punctuation prior to publication, that she urged the leaders to take action to eliminate the grammatical flaws in her earlier written testimonies, prior to being reprinted in larger volumes.

In accordance with her wishes, a decision to do this was made by church leaders in November 1883. At the time, most of her earlier publications primarily consisted of 30 booklets, called *Testimonies*. So, at her request, those earlier publications were carefully proofed for grammatical errors. They were then printed in the format in which we are acquainted with them: *Testimonies for the Church, Volumes 1 through 4*. These came off the press in 1885.

At the urging of Ellen, a committee action was taken to carry out this proofing of those earlier testimonies, prior to reprinting them in four larger volumes.

This committee action has not at all been hidden by the E. G. White Estate, for there is nothing to hide.

“In 1883, when considering the reprinting of the early published testimonies, the General Conference set forth these principles, and went on record as favoring the republication of the *Testimonies* with such grammatical and verbal corrections as seemed necessary. We quote its actions as published in the *Review and Herald* for November 27, 1883.”—A. L. White, *Messenger to the Remnant*, 80.

Here is that committee action:

“32. WHEREAS, Some of the bound volumes of the *Testimonies to the Church* are out of print, so that full sets cannot be obtained at the office; and,

“WHEREAS, There is a constant and urgent call for the reprinting of these volumes; therefore,

“Resolved, That we recommend their republication in such a form as to make four volumes of seven or eight hundred pages each.

“33. WHEREAS, Many of these testimonies were written under the most unfavorable circumstances, the writer being too heavily pressed with anxiety and labor to devote critical thought to the grammatical perfection of the writings, and they were printed in such haste as to allow these imperfections to pass uncorrected; and,

“WHEREAS, We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed; therefore,

“Resolved, That in the republication of these volumes, such verbal changes be made as to remove the above-named imperfections, as far as possible, without in any measure changing the thought.”—

*General Conference action, 1883, published in Review, November 27, 1883.*

After that reprint publication project, of *Testimonies, Volumes 1-4*, was completed, Ellen White henceforth had her own helpers proof her writings prior to publication. However, the galleys (press proofs) which the Review ever corrected in the future were always sent to Ellen White for her careful inspection prior to publication.

Notice that the above 1883 decision applied only to the first four volumes of the *Testimonies*. One of the charges made by a leading “secret writers” critic of the Spirit of Prophecy books, is that the above 1883 action by the General Conference proves that church leaders changed the meaning of the first four volumes of the *Testimonies*.

Well, if that is so, where are the changes? We are talking about our present first four volumes of the *Testimonies*. Examine those books for yourself. Everything in there is solid. Within those pages, leadership is very, very often reproved—and in the strongest terms. We find nothing in those books excusing or flattering church leadership. Yet that is where we would find the concept changes, if any had been made.

Just as in the later volumes of the *Testimonies*, extremely strong criticisms of members and church leaders are to be found in *Volumes 1 through 4*.

That November 1883 General Conference decision was made by the General Conference at the urging of Ellen White. After the vote was taken to do it, on February 19, 1884, Ellen White wrote to Uriah Smith and once again urged that a most careful search for grammatical errors be made, prior to the republication of those old books.

“As far as possible every defect should be removed from all our publications. As the truth should unfold and become widespread, every care should be exercised to perfect the works published.”—*Letter 11, 1884 (February 19, 1884; 3 Selected Messages, 97)*.

Here is more of this lengthy letter. Notice that she was quite aware that critics would make untrue charges, because grammatical corrections were made. But she said to do it anyway. Ellen White never compromised her principles, in order to please anyone.

“Now, Brother Smith, I have been making a careful, critical examination of the work that has been done on the *Testimonies*, and I see a few things that I think should be corrected in the matter brought before you and others at the General Conference [November, 1883]. But as I examine the matter more carefully I see less and less that is objectionable. Where the language used is not the best, I want it made correct and grammatical, as I believe it should be in every case where it can be

without destroying the sense. This work is delayed, which does not please me . . .

“My mind has been exercised upon the question of the *Testimonies* that have been revised. We have looked them over more critically. I cannot see the matter as my brethren see it. I think the changes will improve the book. If our enemies handle it, let them do so . . . [This remark is because she was aware that others would criticize the fact that changes had been made.]

“I think that anything that shall go forth will be criticized, twisted, turned, and boggled, but we are to go forward with a clear conscience, doing what we can and leaving the result with God. We must not be long in delaying the work. ‘Now, my brethren, what do you propose to do? I do not want this work dragging along any longer. I want something done, and done now.’”—*Letter 11, 1884 (February 19, 1884)*.

Here is a comment by Ellen White about the preparation of one of the volumes of the *Testimonies (Volume 6)*. She said that, prior to its publication, she carefully read the copy after it was proofed. But, she adds, she did omit details which would identify individuals who were still living. God instructed her that much of what she had written to certain individuals applied to many others in the church, and would be a benefit to all. But these things were not to be made public in a way to injure the individuals who had been addressed.

“I must select the most important matters for the *Testimony (Volume 6)* and then look over everything prepared for it, and be my own critic; for I would not be willing to have some things which are all truth to be published; because I fear that some would take advantage of them to hurt others.

“After the matter for the *Testimony* is prepared, every article must be read by me. I have to read them myself; for the sound of the voice in reading or singing is almost unendurable to me. I try to bring out general principles, and if I see a sentence which I fear would give someone excuse to injure someone else, I feel at perfect liberty to keep back the sentence, even though it is all perfectly true.”—*Letter 32, 1901*.

### THE USE OF HELPERS

Ellen White always had someone to help improve the grammar and punctuation of her writings.

“In describing the preparation of an Ellen White book, no one procedure can be presented as a uniform plan that she followed through the seventy years of her ministry. Her first book, *Experience and Views*, published in 1851, was largely a col-



# More About The Secret Writers Charge

**PART THREE  
OF SIX**

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lection of visions which had been previously published in broadsides and periodical articles. The books that followed during the next three decades were written chapter by chapter in their natural development of subject matter. Those published during the last half of Ellen White's ministry were comprised of matter currently written and materials drawn from the reservoir of her writings—periodical articles, early books, pamphlets, manuscripts, and letters. To all these Mrs. White added pertinent passages enriching and rounding out the presentation for the forthcoming book. Thus in her later life she made much use of her earlier writings.

“Ellen White said little about the preparation of her writings for publication before the death of her husband. She mentioned, as we have already noted, that he frequently assisted her, and that, in later years, because of the press of duties, others also were called upon for help. After the death of James White, however, helpers were regularly employed to aid in gathering from all her writings pertinent material to form articles for the papers and chapters for books.”—*T. H. Jemison, A Prophet Among You*, 335-336.

Ellen White described it this way:

“While my husband lived, he acted as a helper and counselor in the sending out of the messages that were given to me. We traveled extensively. Sometimes light would be given to me in the night season, sometimes in the daytime before large congregations. The instruction I received in vision was faithfully written out by me, as I had time and strength for the work. Afterward we examined the matter together, my husband correcting grammatical errors and eliminating needless repetition. Then it was carefully copied for the persons addressed, or for the printer.

“As the work grew, others assisted me in the preparation of matter for publication. After my husband's death, faithful helpers joined me, who labored untiringly in the work of copying the testimonies and preparing articles for publication.

“But the reports that are circulated, that any of my helpers are permitted to add matter or change the meaning of the messages I write out, are not true.”—*Letter 225, 1906, published in 1913 in Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies for the Church, 4 (Selected Messages, book 1, 50)*.

Ellen White was aware of her need for helpers to

check over her writings for grammar and punctuation.

“This morning I take into candid consideration my writings. My husband is too feeble to help me prepare them for the printer, therefore I shall do no more with them at present. I am not a scholar. I cannot prepare my own writings for the press. Until I can do this I shall write no more. It is not my duty to tax others with my manuscript.”—*Manuscript 3, 1873 (Diary January 10, 1873)*.

“We rested well last night. This Sabbath morning opens cloudy. My mind is coming to strange conclusions. I am thinking I must lay aside my writing I have taken so much pleasure in, and see if I cannot become a scholar. I am not a grammarian. I will try, if the Lord will help me, at forty-five years old to become a scholar in the science. God will help me. I believe He will.”—*Manuscript 3, 1873 (Diary January 11, 1873)*.

“Now I must leave this subject so imperfectly presented that I fear you will misinterpret that which I feel so anxious to make plain. Oh, that God would quicken the understanding, for I am but a poor writer, and cannot with pen or voice express the great and deep mysteries of God. Oh, pray for yourselves, pray for me.”—*Letter 67, 1894*.

In a letter to Elder G. A. Irwin, Ellen White mentioned her ongoing need for helpers:

“I ought to have someone to whom I can read every article before sending it to the mail. This always helps the writer: for the writer, after reading the matter before one who is interested, often discerns more clearly what is wanted, and the slight changes that should be made.”—*Ellen G. White, Letter 76, 1897 (to Elder G. A. Irwin)*.

She was very firm in her position that she alone was to write the materials and check over that which her helpers corrected.

“My copyists you have seen. They do not change my language. It stands as I write it.

“My work has been in the field since 1845. Ever since then I have labored with pen and voice. Increased light has come to me as I have imparted the light given me. I have very much more light on the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which I shall present to our people.”—*Letter 61a, 1900*.

“I am still as active as ever. I am not in the least decrepit. I am able to do much work, writing and speaking as I did years ago.

“I read over all that is copied, to see that everything is as it should be. I read all the book manu-

script before it is sent to the printer. So you can see that my time must be fully occupied. Besides writing, I am called upon to speak to the different churches and to attend important meetings. I could not do this work unless the Lord helped me.”—*Letter 133, 1902.*

D. E. Robinson, for many years a literary assistant, said this in 1933:

“In all good conscience I can testify that never was I presumptuous enough to venture to add any ideas of my own or to do other than follow with most scrupulous care the thoughts of the author.”—*D. E. Robinson, statement, 1933, quoted in A. L. White, Messenger to the Remnant, 60.*

In the following letter, Ellen White lists a number of her helpers:

“The Lord has given me other faithful helpers in my work. Many of my discourses have been reported, and have been put before the people in printed form. Through nearly the whole of my long experience I have endeavored, day by day, to write out that which was revealed to me in visions of the night. Many messages of counsel and reproof and encouragement have been sent out to individuals, and much of the instruction that I have received for the church has been published in periodicals and books, and circulated in many lands.

“As the work has grown, the number of my helpers has increased.

“Sister Marian Davis was a great help in copying my testimonies, and in preparing for publication the manuscripts which I placed in her hand. I appreciated her help very much. She now sleeps in Jesus.

“For eleven years Miss Maggie Hare was among my workers. She was a faithful and true helper. She returned to New Zealand. [She again connected with the work in 1911.]

“Recently Miss Minnie Hawkins, of Hobart, Tasmania, who was one of my copyists in Australia, has joined my staff of workers.

“During the General Conference of 1901, Brother C. C. Crisler was impressed by the Spirit of God that I needed him in my work, and he offered his services. I gladly accepted his help. He is a faithful, efficient, and conscientious worker.

“Dores Robinson has assisted in copying my testimonies, and he has been diligently preparing ‘Life Incidents’ for publication.

“Helen Graham is a good stenographer, and helps Sister Sara McEnterfer and W. C. White in their work of correspondence.

“Sister Sarah Peck was my bookkeeper and helper for a number of years. She has left us to engage in schoolwork at College View. We now have as bookkeeper, Brother Paul C. Mason.

“Sister McEnterfer is my traveling companion, nurse, and helper in many ways.

“Sister Mary Steward and her mother are with

us now; and Mary, who for many years has served as proofreader in the offices at Battle Creek and Nashville, has united with my workers.

“The work is constantly moving forward. We are making earnest efforts to place my writings before the people. We hope that several new books will go to press shortly. If I am incapacitated for labor, my faithful workers are prepared to carry forward the work.

“Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last. My writings are kept on file in the office, and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people.”—*“The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies to the Church.”*

Here are two statements by W. C. White on Ellen White’s use of helpers:

“Her copyists have been conscientious people and were faithful in following her instructions, that no change of thought and no additional thought should be brought into the work by them. And that there might not be any error through their misunderstanding of the manuscript or any change of thought through their grammatical corrections, she has faithfully examined the manuscripts again, and when the presentation was satisfactory to her, she gave it her approval, and not until then was it sent out as copy for the printer, or as a letter or manuscript to men, or groups of men for their instruction.”—*W. C. White Letter, Ellen G. White Office Document File 52a.*

“Mother writes very rapidly. She does much of her writing early in the morning. She often writes upon many subjects in one letter or manuscript, just as subject after subject is flashed upon her mind. These manuscripts she passes to one who is expert in reading her writing, to copy off on the typewriter, and then it is given back to Mother, and she examines it, making such corrections, changes, and additions as she sees fit. Then it is copied again, and sent out according to Mother’s direction. Sometimes a long personal letter will contain matter which she wishes to use in a more general letter to be sent to a group of workers. Sometimes it contains material for an article for one of our periodicals, or a chapter in a book.”—*W. C. White, “The Integrity of the Testimonies to the Church,” November 25, 1905. Ellen G. White Publications Office Document File 107d.*

Here is an additional clarifying statement on how Ellen White wrote:

“The manuscripts that came from the pen of Ellen White varied considerably in editorial perfection. When she wrote at a moderate speed, and not under undue pressure because of traveling, preaching, or other responsibilities, her work revealed good grammar, careful sentence structure,

## More about the Secret Writers Charge

and comparative freedom from errors in spelling and punctuation. Haste in writing multiplied the minor errors, but it did not materially affect the flow of the language or the development of ideas. Repetitions crept in and at times thoughts were introduced which contained gems of truth, but which were not entirely relevant to the subject at hand. Again, there were instances when the transposition of a passage would add strength or lead to a more logical presentation. Under instruction from Mrs. White, her literary assistants were to make such changes as would, within the framework of her thoughts and words, render the passages grammatically and rhetorically correct. Nothing was added, and no thoughts were changed.

“After the suggested changes and copying were completed, the manuscript was returned to Ellen White for her additions, corrections, and approval. She reread carefully the whole of the matter, made her insertions, deletions, and revisions, and then turned it back to the copyist for the final draft to be made. The finished copy was then returned to her for reading, approval, and signature.”—*T. H. Jemison, A Prophet Among You, 336-337.*

“The larger part of the work of Ellen White’s assistants was not that of correcting errors in grammar and spelling. It lay rather in the field of gathering from her writings passages that would make suitable articles for the periodicals and chapters for books. Had Ellen White undertaken to perform this task herself, it would have meant that her time available for new writing would have been reduced so materially that it would not have been possible for her to discharge her responsibility in that line.”—*Op. cit., 338.*

The following statement was part of an address, given to the 1913 General Conference Session, by W. C. White. It provides a description of some of the on-going work of Ellen White’s helpers.

“Our workers are now gathering together material for a new edition of *Gospel Workers*. We are also gathering into chapters what Mother has written on Old Testament history. Probably nine tenths of this work is already done, and we hope that the book may be published before Christmas. Some of this matter was about ready, we thought, to place in the printer’s hands, when Mother, upon going over some of the chapters, expressed herself as not fully satisfied. She thought there were other things she had written that we had not yet found, and she desired that these be searched out, if possible, and included. So we have laid the manuscript away in our fireproof vault, and after this Conference probably four different persons will spend six or eight weeks in reading through the thousands of pages of manuscript in the file to see if we can find the additional matter that she thinks is in existence.

“It would be comparatively easy to hasten along the preparation of these manuscripts for publication in book form, if we were to write in a little

here and there where she has written only a portion of the story on certain topics and has left a portion incomplete. I say, if her secretaries were authorized by God to do that work, and could write in the connections, the book could be prepared for the printer much faster. But this cannot be done; we can deal only with the matter which we have in hand.

“For this reason, when you get the book on Old Testament history, you will find that there are some stories partly told, and not fully completed. You will find that there are many things you hoped to read about, that are not mentioned. Mother has written quite fully on Solomon, something on the divided monarchy, a little about Elijah and Elisha, quite fully about Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and we are gathering this and other matter and grouping it into chapters.

“You may say, What do you mean by this ‘gathering’? Did not Sister White sit down and write out quite fully and connectedly that which she had to say about the controversy, about Jeroboam and Rehoboam, about Jeremiah and Isaiah and other Old Testament characters?—No; not on all the principal characters. Her life has been a busy one. She has been kept constantly at the front, speaking to the people, meeting emergencies. Some of the most precious things she has written about Old Testament and New Testament characters were written first in letters to individuals. Some of the most precious paragraphs in *Desire of Ages*, passages describing Christ’s controversies with the Pharisees and the Herodians, were written under circumstances like these:

“At Ashfield, New South Wales, Elder Corliss and some faithful helpers had been presenting the truth until there was a group of about thirty people keeping the Sabbath, ready to be baptized and organized into a church. The Campbellites could not bear to see that done. A bitter opponent came and challenged our brethren personally and through the papers. This was ignored as long as it could be. Finally, our friends, those in the truth, demanded that there be a discussion. So a discussion was arranged for.

“In the night season this matter was laid before Mother. She had never seen the Campbellite champion; but the man was shown to her—his spirit, his methods, his tactics. He had nothing to lose in that community; and it was presented to Mother that his plan would be to endeavor to irritate Elder Corliss, and get him to say things that would discredit him before the people who were embracing the truth.

“During the progress of that discussion, Mother wrote to Elder Corliss, stating that it had been presented to her that his opponent in the discussion would work on certain lines, and that he must take such a course as to disappoint the enemy. As she wrote these cautions, her memory would be re-

vived as to what had been presented to her about the work of Christ, and how the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the Herodians had followed Him with accusations and question, endeavoring to discredit Him before the people.

“When we came to make up the chapters for *Desire of Ages*, we found in those letters the most vivid description of those experiences, that she had written anywhere. And we found other most precious passages that had been written first in letters to members of the General Conference Committee, and to conference presidents, regarding situations which were illustrated by the experiences of these Old and New Testament characters.

“Being written in this way, it takes much time to search through the writings and find these passages, and bring them together into manuscripts. After these are gathered, and grouped into chapter form, the manuscript is always submitted to Mother. She reads it over carefully. Up to the present time every chapter of every book, and all the articles for our periodicals—unless they happen to be reprints—have passed through her hands, and have been read over by her. Sometimes she interlines; sometimes she adds much matter; sometimes she says, ‘Cannot you find more on this subject?’ And then, when more has been found, and added, the manuscript is recopied, and handed back to her again for examination. And when she finally signs it and returns it to us we are permitted to send it out.”—*W. C. White, General Conference Bulletin, June 1, 1913.*

Here is an interesting comment by one who did careful research into the Ellen White books:

“Despite the change of helpers through the years, the books consistently display the individuality of the author. Always there appears the firm grasp of Bible thought and language, the facility of expression, the colorful phrase, the persistent but winsome appeal. The early letters which had no benefit of the reading and suggestions of others are of the same character as those of later years.”—*T. H. Jemison, A Prophet Among You, 348.*

At times, Ellen White was traveling in Australia while her helpers, back at the office (also in Australia), were gathering material from her writings which could be used by her, on her return, in writing *Desire of Ages*. Here are some of the letters Marian Davis sent at that time:

“Now about the book. I am so glad you are writing on the two journeys to Galilee. I was so afraid you would not bring that out. Shall hope to receive something from you before long.”—*Marian Davis to Ellen White, August 2, 1895.*

“Oh, when I see how we seem to be in the circles

of a whirlpool, that is sweeping us faster and faster toward the great consummation, I do long to see this book go out, to reveal Christ to the people as He is, in His beauty . . . I shall be so glad when we can talk over the work. So many points come up, that I want to ask about . . . I will send you a few more chapters soon . . . I am real anxious to get some chapters finished and some gaps filled.”—*Marian Davis to Ellen White, October 18, 1895.*

“We sent the letter for Sydney workers to Brother \_\_\_. It was so good. I must keep all the general for my scrapbooks. Of late I have been using the matter gleaned from late letters, testimonies, etc. Have found some of the most precious things, some in those letters to Elder Corliss. They have been to me like a storehouse of treasures. There’s something in these personal testimonies that are written under deep feeling, that comes close to the heart. It seems to me the things gathered in this way give a power and significance to the book that nothing else does.”—*Marian Davis to Ellen White, November 25, 1895.*

In the following letter, Marian describes how she found a gem in one of Ellen White’s earlier letters; this fit so well into one of Marian’s “scrapbooks,” which were collections of earlier Spirit of Prophecy writings. Ellen White would then work this over and transform it into a completed book.

“The article I send, ‘*No Reward but of Grace*,’ the parable of the laborers, is the last of the matter that was prepared for the book . . . The last paragraphs seem to me very precious . . . A few sentences you will recognize as from a letter lately written, ‘The golden gate is not opened to the proud in spirit, but the everlasting portals will open wide to the trembling touch of a little child.’ ”—*Marian Davis to Ellen White, March 10, 1898.*

The above sentence is in *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 404. It was originally written by Ellen White in a letter to Mrs. Wessels of Africa, dated February 21, 1898.

Here is the remainder of the above letter:

“You left me a manuscript on the Unjust Steward, and I have been collecting material to complete this, and have found some precious things to add to the closing chapters of the life of Christ. Of course I cannot complete the chapters (the last two) until I receive what you write on the ministry of healing.

“When the Unjust Steward is done, I shall have finished all I can do on the parable book, until I hear from you.”—*Marian Davis to Ellen White, March 10, 1898.*

After the completed copy for *Desire of Ages* had been finished and sent to Pacific Press for publication,

# More About The Secret Writers Charge

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Continued from the preceding tract in this series

Marian found more excellent material, culled from earlier Spirit of Prophecy letters.

This was included in the published book (on pages 86-87).

“I have been gathering out the precious things from those new manuscripts on the early life of Jesus. Sent a number of new pages to California by the Vancouver mail, and shall send more for later chapters by the next mail. Two of these articles on Christ’s missionary work I let Brother James have to read in church. Last Sabbath he read the one which speaks of the Saviour’s denying Himself of food to give to the poor. These things are unspeakably precious. I hope it is not too late to get them into the book. It has been a feast to work on this matter.”—*Marian Davis to Ellen White, March 1, 1898.*

## MARIAN DAVIS

In her later years, she employed helpers that assisted in getting out her books. One of the most important of these was Marian Davis. She wrote this about Marian’s work:

“She does her work in this way: She takes my articles which are published in the papers, and pastes them in blank books. She also has a copy of all the letters I write. In preparing a chapter for a book, Marian remembers that I have written something on that special point, which may make the matter more forcible. She begins to search for this, and if when she finds it, she sees that it will make the chapter more clear, she adds it.

“The books are not Marian’s productions, but my own, gathered from all my writings. Marian has a large field from which to draw, and her ability to arrange the matter is of great value to me. It saves my poring over a mass of matter, which I have no time to do.

“So you understand that Marian is a most valuable help to me in bringing out my books.”—*Letter 61a, 1900 (3 Selected Messages, 91-92).*

Marian sometimes made suggestions which Ellen White appreciated:

“Tell her [Marian Davis] I have just one minute ago read the letters in which she has specified the improvements to be made in articles for *Volume 1 [Patriarchs and Prophets]*. I thank her. Tell her that she has a point about Zedekiah having his eyes put out. That needs to be more carefully worded—

also the rock, when the water flowed—something in reference to this. I think I can make the articles specified more full.”—*Letter 38, 1885.*

Marian was very careful with Ellen White’s writings; so much so that, sometimes, she seemed too picky about asking about every detail. Ellen White wrote to her daughter-in-law:

“Mary, Willie [her son, W. C. White] is in meeting early and late, devising, planning for the doing of better and more efficient work in the cause of God. We see him only at the table. Marian will go to him for some little matters that it seems she could settle for herself. She is nervous and hurried and he so worn he has to just shut his teeth together and hold his nerves as best he can.

“I have had a talk with her and told her she must settle many things herself that she has been bringing Willie. Her mind is on every point and the connections, and his mind has been plowing through a variety of difficult subjects until his brain reels and then his mind is in no way prepared to take up these little minutia. She must just carry some of these things that belong to her part of the work, and not bring them before him nor worry his mind with them . . . Every little change of a word she wants us to see.”—*Letter 64a, 1889, 1, Manuscript Release No. 728, 22.*

Ellen White wrote this about the help of Marian Davis in the preparation of *Desire of Ages*:

“I feel very thankful for the help of Sister Marian Davis in getting out my books. She gathers materials from my diaries, from my letters, and from the articles published in the papers. I greatly prize her faithful service. She has been with me for twenty-five years, and has constantly been gaining increasing ability for the work of classifying and grouping my writings.”—*Letter 9, 1903; 3 Selected Messages, 93.*

But that same year, Marian became very ill. Ellen White wrote about the woman who had been “in perfect harmony” with her for a quarter century.

“I am leaving tomorrow for Battle Creek. Yet my soul is drawn to the dying girl who has served me for the last twenty-five years. We have stood side by side in the work, and in perfect harmony in that work. And when she would be gathering up the precious jots and tittles that had come in papers and books and present it to me, ‘Now,’ she would say, ‘there is something wanted [needed]. I cannot supply it.’ [Marian would not dare to add anything, only correct that which had been written.] I would look it over, and in one moment I could trace the

line right out.”—3 *Selected Messages*, 93.

“I would have been very glad, could I have felt free to remain another week in Battle Creek. I would have done this, but Marian’s sickness called me home. Her case was a heavy weight on my mind. We received letters every day telling us of her increasing weakness. The thought that I must part with her was a great trial to me. She had been with me for twenty-five years, and we blended nicely in our work. I knew that if she should die, I could not find another to supply her place. Our ideas in regard to the work were one, and we often talked together. Every word that I spoke to make a point clearer, she would write out at once.”—9 *Manuscript Releases*, 271.

It is clear that Ellen White had literary assistants, that she had them because she wanted them, and that they cooperated fully with her wishes.

But what if one of them had secretly tried to make some actual changes in the concepts in her writings? Would she have known about it? Yes, she would. God would immediately instruct her of this fact. For, you see, on one occasion someone tried to do it.

#### **FANNIE BOLTON: THE HELPER WHO DID MAKE CHANGES**

Fannie Bolton was the one helper who did try to change Ellen White’s Writings. —*And as soon as she did it, and every time she did it, Ellen White was told by the angel what was happening.*

Fanny Bolton had earlier been a newspaper writer in the United States. After she became a Seventh-day Adventist, she decided to join Ellen White as one of her literary helpers. So, shortly after her baptism, she accompanied Ellen White to Australia.

But, as soon as Fannie made some changes, even though they might have been small—God showed Ellen White in vision what was happening. *If God did this when Fannie Bolton tried to make changes, we can know He would have done the same thing if anyone else had tried to make changes which were improper.*

First, we will quote a couple of Ellen White statements comparing Fannie Bolton with Marian Davis; then we will quote other statements about the Bolton problem, and how Ellen White was very careful to deal with it.

“Marian had been with me about twenty-five years. She was my chief worker in arranging the matter for my books. She ever appreciated the writings as sacred matter placed in her hands, and would often relate to me what comfort and blessing she received in performing this work, that it was her health and her life to do this work. She ever handled the matters placed in her hands as sacred. I shall miss her so much. Who will fill her place?”—*Manuscript 146*, 1904.

“Marian’s work is of a different order altogether. She is my bookmaker. Fanny [Bolton] never was my bookmaker. How are my books made? Marian

does not put in her claim for recognition.

“She does her work in this way: She takes my articles which are published in the papers, and pastes them in blank books. She also has a copy of all the letters I write. In preparing a chapter for a book, Marian remembers that I have written something on that special point, which may make the matter more forcible. She begins to search for this, and if when she finds it, she sees that it will make the chapter more clear, she adds it.

“The books are not Marian’s productions, but my own, gathered from all my writings. Marian has a large field from which to draw, and her ability to arrange the matter is of great value to me. It saves my poring over a mass of matter, which I have no time to do.

“So you understand that Marian is a most valuable help to me in bringing out my books. Fanny had none of this work to do. Marian has read chapters to her, and Fanny has sometimes made suggestions as to the arrangement of the matter.

“This is the difference between the workers. As I have stated, Fanny has been strictly forbidden to change my words for her words. As spoken by the heavenly agencies, the words are severe in their simplicity; and I try to put the thoughts into such simple language that a child can understand every word uttered. The words of someone else would not rightly represent me.

“I have written thus fully in order that you may understand the matter. Fanny may claim that she has made my books, but she has not done so. This has been Marian’s field, and her work is far in advance of any work Fanny has done for me.”—*Letter 61a*, 1900.

In Manuscript Release 926, Ellen White wrote this:

“Again I was listening [in vision] to earnest talk between herself [Fannie Bolton] and Marian, and it was of that character that gave me great pain of heart. A voice spoke to me, ‘Beware and do not place your dependence upon Fannie to prepare articles or to make books. She cuts out words that should appear, and places her own ideas and words in their stead, and because she has done this she has become deceived, deluded, and is deceiving and deluding others. She is your Adversary. Additions and subtractions are made that do not represent your simplicity. She is not true to her duty, yet flatters herself that she is doing a very important work.’

“I am now brought where I lay down my pen. I cannot write even on the Life of Christ, until I understand whether my writings are to come forth with Fannie’s ideas and language . . . Let this impression be made on the minds of our ministers, and of what value or force will the testimonies be to them?

“Her ardent love for praise and ambition was very similar to that presented to me in regard to the workings of Satan in the heavenly courts to

bring disaffection among the angels, and she would repeat the same course she had pursued, and I could not trust her and depend on her. I beg you will come to my help just as soon as possible, but I am not willing Elder Olsen should return to America before these matters have a most thorough, careful investigation. I do not think I can in the future have any copy placed in the hands of Fannie. I would come at once to you but do not think that would be wisdom.”—*Manuscript Release 926, 20.*

“When I take the position which I am sorry, very sorry, to take, that I cannot consistently continue the connection with Fannie by entrusting her with my writings as I have done, some will misjudge me because they think she has sincerely repented; but the fact that she has not had respect for the writings, will endanger the work I am called of the Lord to do. The fact that her mind could be tampered with so often again and again by the enemy, that she could be led to regard the writings as she has regarded them, will be a temptation to place them at disadvantage.

“This past experience has given a mold to the thoughts, and has fashioned the mind and judgment. I can see no safety in trusting the matter the Lord shall give me in the hands of one of such unstable, unreliable developments of character that a balance wheel is needed constantly, else she will be running off on a side track where Satan may choose to lead the way.

“Fannie is so wrapped up in her own exalted estimation of herself that any contrary influence that has been brought to bear upon her mind meets with a resistance that is according to the attributes of the enemy. The surroundings, the impulses, give tone and character to the whole life. There are too large and important interests at stake in this matter to be lightly imperiled. Should I consent that Fannie remain in connection with the work, there would be a constant burden of foreboding upon me, for these elements of character are not easily changed. The work which she has handled, she does not always appreciate as necessary or essential, and if she dared, would mold them all over.”—*Manuscript Release, 926, 26-27.*

About a visit that Fannie made to the Prescotts, Ellen White wrote:

“She had underscored some words in a book, *Christian Education*. ‘Beautiful words,’ she called them, and said that she had put in those words, they were hers. If this were the truth, I ask, Who told her to put in her words in my writings? She has, if her own statement is correct, been unfaithful to me.

“Sister Prescott however says that, in the providence of God that very article came to them (Brother and Sister Prescott) uncopied and in my own handwriting, and that these very words were in that letter. So Fannie’s statement regarding these

words is proved to be untrue.

“She [Fannie] becomes at times as verily possessed by demons as were human beings in the days of Christ. And when these paroxysms are upon her, many think she is inspired of God. She is fluent, her words come thick and fast, and she is under the control of demons. Then she claims that she has done the very things in my service I have told her in no case to do, that she has substituted her words for my words. This is bad enough. But when she takes the position that she has made my books, my articles and is responsible for the beautiful language, it is evident that Satan can through her do me any amount of harm. She can do more to implant doubts and sow seeds of evil than any person I know. She is a dangerous helper to me. She shall never have a chance again of mingling Fannie Bolton’s wonderful talent with my work.”—*Manuscript Release, 926, 43-44.*

“She appears in great distress and grief, weeping. Sister Prescott, while in Cooranbong, asked her what was the matter. She held back apparently reluctant to speak, and finally she did just exactly that which she calculated to do—make her statement and complained of the little attention ‘poor little Marian’ and she received ‘for all the talent they gave to Sister White’s work.’

“Well, Sister Prescott met her decidedly, also Brother Prescott. They told her this was all the work of the devil. They knew Sister White’s work and writings before she touched it, and they received letters from her just as they came from her pen and that the very words she claimed to put into the writings were her own imagination. All the ideas, all the material, was furnished her to prepare into articles, etc., etc.

“When I called back all the writings placed in her hands, then she began to think I was in earnest. I told her decidedly she must have no connection with me and my work. She could [pretend to] represent me and my work as her originating, that this ‘beautiful expression’ was hers, and that was hers, and [by that fiction] make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.”—*Manuscript Release, 926, 54-55.*

Notice that, when Fannie Bolton claimed to have changed the words, she was “making of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.” She was destroying the power of the Spirit of Prophecy in the minds of anyone who believed her. What would Ellen White say today to those who claim that various people did that to Ellen White’s writings back then? She would say that they are destroying the souls of precious Advent believers willing to believe those lies.

“Well, I cannot write all the suffering of mind I endured. I could not possibly relate the suffering of mind while attending the camp meeting at Melbourne. I told Fannie I could not connect her with the work. No one could determine when the demon would take possession of her and cost me

my life. I told her she never loved to work, and her moods, her fickle temperament, had been to me the greatest grief of my life. I was as a cart pressed beneath sheaves, and no longer would I venture this.”—*Manuscript Release, 926, 55.*

“I told Fannie Bolton that it had nearly cost me my life to connect with her, and if I had another one united with her and the two to handle, I should soon be buried. No, I am entirely separated from Fannie. Never while time lasts will another article of mine pass into her hands. She has sought to betray me, to turn traitor, to say things that leave untrue impressions upon minds. She has educated herself in theatrical methods, and can act out to life in apparent sincerity a thing that is false.”—*Manuscript Release, 926, 60-61.*

There are men today who are spreading the similar falsehoods. Like Fannie, they do it to gain attention, fame, and financial support. By detaching men and women from the Spirit of Prophecy, they attach them to themselves. They pretend to be the wise ones who alone are able to tell which Spirit of Prophecy books and passages are still inspired.

Ellen White wrote this to Fannie Bolton:

“Your words regarding me and my writings are false, and I must say that you know them to be false. Nevertheless, those unacquainted with you take your words as being the words of one who knows. Because you have been acquainted with me, and connected with me, you can state what you please, and you think that your tracks are so covered that they will never be discovered. But my writings have not stopped. They go out as I have written them. No words of my copyists are put in the place of my own words. This is a testimony that cannot be controverted. My articles speak for themselves.

“When I heard that McCullagh had apostatized, I said, I am glad that all my connection with him has been of the tenderest character. I thought that there was nothing they could have to say against me. But both he and his wife bore the same report that Sister Malcolm bore to me. McCullagh stated in a large congregation that it was reported by one who knew that I picked up things written in books, and sent them out as something the Lord had shown me. At the Bible Institute in Cooranbong, McCullagh told me that you had made a statement to him and his wife similar to the statement made to Sr. Malcolm. Your sowing is producing its harvest. Many in Melbourne have been repeating the same things, things which you have told them, and which they thought must be true.”—*Manuscript Release, 926, 77-78.*

“My writings . . . go out as I have written them. No words of my copyists are put in the place of my

own words. This is a testimony that cannot be controverted,” is what Ellen White said in the above statement.

How could she be so certain? She could be certain because the angel assured her it was so; and, when any effort was made by another to change them, she would immediately be warned so she could put a stop to it.

Can her statement be controverted? No, it cannot, because she said it cannot. So when people say otherwise, they are telling an untruth. But more, knowing that Ellen White has said that her writings have never been changed,—yet claiming that they have,—those critics are directly attacking Ellen White and her writings, and are committing the sin against the Holy Spirit.

“I have told you these things that you may understand about the matter. We had the affair between Fannie and Caldwell all through the Armadale camp meeting. I talked with them both separately, and told them that the Lord had a controversy with them both. They denied that there was anything like particular attachment between them. I knew better; but the Lord helped me to work through the meeting. Just before the meeting closed, Fannie came to me, and said, ‘Oh Sr. White, I have come to you as to a mother. I do love Bro. Caldwell with all my heart, and my heart is just broken. Three times has this cup of bliss been presented to me, and then been snatched away.’ Then the girl said, ‘I prayed that if it was right for us to get married, his wife might get a divorce from him, and it was not many weeks before she did get a divorce. Now don’t you think the Lord heard my prayer?’ I dared not talk with her; for I had to speak that day before a large congregation. If Sr. Prescott is in Battle Creek, she will be able to tell you the particulars.

“Well, from that time I cut loose from Fannie, never, as I thought, to connect with her again. But a little while after this, Fannie was in Sydney, and wrote me another confession. I thought that I could not take her back, but the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and said, ‘Give her another trial.’ So I decided that I would see Fannie, and tell her that I would take her back. This I did, and she remained with me several weeks, but was not able to do any work; and then she decided that she wanted to go home to her mother, and I told her that she might feel free to do so. And now after all the suffering and distress that I have passed through because of the actions of these two, and the downright lies they told, to have Fannie Bolton put these articles in the paper, exalting her poor, miserable, blind, poverty-stricken soul, Miss Ashbury is a little too large a mouthful for me to swallow. It tastes strong of the dish. If I can find them, I will send you copies of letters written to both Fannie and Caldwell

Continued on the next tract



# More About The Secret Writers Charge

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Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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“In the past she has expressed wonderful sorrow for her wicked course of action, but she does not stay penitent. She does not continue to be contrite in heart. She flashes forth, thinking she is inspired by God. While she was praying to the Lord that if it was right for her to marry Caldwell, his wife might get a divorce from her husband, she told me that as she talked and gave Bible readings, the people turned pale to hear her talk, and she thought she was inspired by God. Her imagination is very strong, and she makes such exaggerated statements that her words are not trustworthy.”—*Manuscript Release, 926, 80.*

“You may reason with others on this line: Wherein do my articles in the papers now differ from what they were when Fannie was with me? Who is it that now puts in words to supply the deficiencies of my language, my deplorable ignorance? How was this done before Fannie Bolton had anything to do with my writings? Cannot people who have reason see this? If Fannie supplied my great deficiency, how is it that I can now send articles to the papers? What Fannie says in regard to this is all a sham. Does she not know it? Or does Satan work on her imagination in such a way that she thinks what she says is true? I tell you that there is not a semblance of truth in her statements . . .

“This is the difference between the workers. As I have stated, Fannie has been strictly forbidden to change my words for her words. As spoken by the heavenly agencies, the words are severe in their simplicity; and I try to put the thoughts into such simple language that a child can understand every word uttered. The words of someone else would not rightly represent me. I have written thus fully in order that you may understand the matter. Fannie Bolton may claim that she has made my books, but she has not done so. This has been Marian’s field, and her work is far in advance of any work Fannie has done for me. I have written this letter between half past twelve and four o’clock a.m. I must now leave it to write other letters. But I wish to ask, if Fannie is converted and is used by the Lord, why is not her vision clear in reference to her past representation of the work she has done for me? I think the first work the Holy Spirit would do for her would be to lead her to confess that by false statements she has misrepresented me to others. The Lord would

clear away the mist and fog from her mind, leading her to see the great injury she has done me by saying that she made over all my writings.

“When the Lord teaches her and reveals to her how she has unsettled and undermined the faith of many in the testimonies of the Spirit of God, as she has unsettled and undermined the faith of Brother Bartholf in the work the Lord has given me to do, by making the statement that she was directed to write a testimony to A. R. Henry, she will see where she is standing. The statement in regard to the testimony for A. R. Henry is an absolute falsehood.

“Those who receive such statements are without excuse. ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ My work has been in the field since 1845. Ever since then I have labored with pen and voice. Increased light has come to me as I have imparted the light given me. I have very much more light on the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which I shall present to our people if my way is not blocked by such influences as the influence exerted by Fannie Bolton. Such a work as hers calls for my pen and voice to contradict her statements, in order to save poor souls from being entirely swamped by her assertion that she has received the Holy Ghost. This is another phase of her desire to exalt herself as ordained by the Lord to bear a message to His people. The Lord did not send her, yet she ran. She will not honor the cause of God, but will mislead others.

“Some may ask, Why was Sr. Bolton allowed to be so long connected with the work, if this desire for praise, this tendency to self-exaltation was manifested? At different times I labored with her faithfully, pointing out her danger, and endeavoring to help her to understand the character of the work and the relations of the human agent to it. Many times she acknowledged the mistakes that her approbateness had led her to make, and confessed her weakness and love of praise. She would declare that the lesson had now been thoroughly learned, and that thereafter she would guard against self-exaltation. And she was always anxious to retain her connection with the work, sometimes begging with tears not to be disconnected from it.”—*Manuscript Release, 926, 93-95.*

The following letter was sent Brother and Sister Haskell and Brother G. A. Irwin:

“Something is being sent to you in regard to Fannie Bolton. You need to say to all our people that she is not the Lord’s messenger, and she should

in no way be encouraged. She would mingle the theatrical with her spiritual actions, that would not elevate, but degrade the cause of God. She is a farce. I have several copies of letters in her own handwriting, confessions, which I cannot possibly get copied. They must not go out of my hands until they are copied. Caldwell took a testimony from her hands that related to them both, and burned it up, and then told her she need not worry any more about [it]; she nor Sister White would ever see it again. Then he was pressed by me for the testimony. Caldwell said he would bring it to me, and then said he could not find it; and then when I told him I knew what he had done with it, he said he must have burned it with some of his letters he did not care to keep; and then afterward he confessed his falsehoods, and said he burnt it designedly. Well, I have quite a large amount of letters concerning this matter between Fannie and me. If it needs to be all exposed before the people will be undeceived, I will send these letters after they are copied. But tell our people I do not want to expose Fannie, unless I am obliged to do this to save the cause of God from being corrupted.”—*Letter 166, 1900 (April 25, 1900), 1-2.*

The Fannie Bolton episode was, indeed, a sad one. Yet, for us today, it is invaluable. We have here an actual incident in which someone tried to change the wording of Ellen White’s manuscripts. From this experience, we can know of a certainty that (1) as soon as it occurred, the angel told her exactly what was happening; (2) Ellen White immediately set to work to keep it from happening anymore; and (3) she warned others to beware of the individual who was doing it.

### WILLIAM C. WHITE

Some of the secret writers critics declare that Ellen White’s son, William C. White made changes in her writings,—and even wrote entire books under her name. This is ludicrous, for Ellen White would have been warned by the angel and protested if he had done it. In addition, with his extremely busy schedule, where would he have had the time, and been able to exercise the secrecy, to do all that writing?

But liars will lie; and the secret writers critics are liars who enjoy astonishing believers with their reports, that most of the Spirit of Prophecy writings are unreliable.

On October 23, 1907, Ellen White wrote the following letter to Elder F. M. Wilcox. It reveals a lot about her literary helpers. We will quote it in full. This letter provides background information on how her son, William C. White, was selected by the Lord to be a special helper to her in her work.

“About a year after the death of my husband [he died in 1881], I was very feeble, and it was feared that I might live but a short time. At the Healdsburg camp meeting, I was taken into the tent where there was a large gathering of our people. I asked

to be raised up from the lounge on which I was lying, and assisted to the speaker’s platform, that I might say a few words of farewell to the people. As I tried to speak, the power of God came upon me, and thrilled me through and through. Many in the congregation observed that I was weak, and that my face and hands seemed bloodless; but as I began speaking they saw the color coming into my lips and face, and knew that a miracle was being wrought in my behalf. I stood before the people healed, and spoke with freedom.

“After this experience, light was given me that the Lord had raised me up to bear testimony for Him in many countries, and that He would give me grace and strength for the work. It was also shown me that my son, W. C. White, should be my helper and counselor, and that the Lord would place on him the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind. I was shown that the Lord would guide him, and that he would not be led away, because he would recognize the leadings and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

“The assurance was given me: ‘You are not alone in the work the Lord has chosen you to do. You will be taught of God how to bring the truth in its simplicity before the people. The God of truth will sustain you, and convincing proof will be given that He is leading you. God will give you of His Holy Spirit, and His grace and wisdom and keeping power will be with you . . .

“The Lord will be your Instructor. You will meet with deceptive influences; they will come in many forms, in pantheism and other forms of infidelity; but follow where I shall guide you, and you will be safe. I will put My Spirit upon your son, and will strengthen him to do his work. He has the grace of humility. The Lord has selected him to act an important part in His work. For this purpose was he born.’

“This word was given me in 1882, and since that time I have been assured that the grace of wisdom was given to him. More recently, in a time of perplexity, the Lord said: ‘I have given you My servant, W. C. White, and I will give him judgment to be your helper. I will give him skill and understanding to manage wisely.’”—*The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies to the Church.*”

Here is another statement on this same subject:

“He [God] had chosen my sons to be my helpers. My son Willie especially was assigned the work of ministry with me to advise and counsel how to prepare the communications that were to come to the people. ‘I will be his wisdom, I will be his judgment, and he shall work out in connection with his mother the important matter to come before the people. Select helpers must be given, for a great work is to be done. I will be your wisdom, I will be your judgment, for your son to carry out understandingly the matters I shall reveal to you; that which is for the churches must be brought out dis-

tinctly in print that the churches may have it.

“ I will appoint both your children that they shall strengthen your hands in sound judgment. But your youngest son shall carry the work with you, and I have appointed the eldest his work to do. They must be united firmly in harmony, and in no way fail or be discouraged. They are to aid one another to stand firmly, unitedly, in heart and mind. But the youngest will I endow with special wisdom to work intelligently for a special performance of this responsibility.

“ Both will be your helpers, in perfect agreement, conducting different lines in missionary work, standing firmly, unitedly, for great battles are to be fought. Your sons are of different temperaments. Your youngest will be your dependence, but the eldest shall be my minister to open the Word to very many people and to organize the work in various lines.

“ Temptations will come to the eldest that preference in judgment shall be given him above the youngest. But this cannot be. Both are to be guided by the light given their mother and stand in perfect harmony. Trials will come, but unitedly victories will be gained.

“ There will be the character in the youngest that he will be counselor in large degree, and receive the words I shall give you and act upon them. Let no jealousy come in because of the position I have appointed the youngest. I have put My Spirit upon him, and if the eldest will respect the position given the youngest, both shall become strong to build up the work in different lines. The eldest must be standing as ready to be counseled by the youngest, for I have made him My counselor. And because I have given him from his birth special traits of character which the eldest has not, there is to be no contention, no strife, no division, but [they are to be] sanctified in the same work to bring about the desired end.’

“Much more was definitely explained in the words I may hereafter write, but I would not pen them now.

“The Lord said, ‘I will prove them both, but both must stand distinct and separate from influences which will be brought to bear to break up the plans I have marked out. But the youngest is fitted for a work that will make him counselor, receiving the words from his mother. Both must carefully consider matters that I shall give, for there are times and places for the subjects to be taken up and certain times and certain places for the subjects to be left.

“The Lord will be your guide if you work obedient to all that I shall command you. This matter is not to be opened to your children, for both are to be proved. The time will come when you may have to speak all that I shall give you, but both sons are to be workmen and are to be at perfect agreement if they accomplish the work. They are to [be] faith-

ful in performing [it]. They are to stand distinct and not bound up with men, to be influenced by them. I am your Counselor and theirs.’”—*21 Manuscript Release, 141-142.*

If you will do a search on William C. White (“Willie,” his nickname), you will find 835 references in the Spirit of Prophecy. That is a large number; yet not a single reproof was directed at him, nor one complaint made about his workmanship.

“Sands, Va., Sabbath, Nov. 8, 1890. We have beautiful weather. Willie White spoke in the morning with great freedom and his discourse made a favorable impression on all who heard him. This is the very work the Lord would have him to do. His work will be more in this line as he will necessarily have to accompany me from place to place as I journey among the people of God. I have had neither of my sons to accompany me. I have been alone with Sara McEnterfer as my companion. It is time this order of things changed. Willie is correspondent of foreign missions and I need him, and he must be prepared to preach the gospel to the people wherever he goes.”—*2 Manuscript Release, 326.*

But criticism of W. C. White did occur. The conflict at Minneapolis in 1888 was severe, and those who sided with Ellen White, Alonzo T. Jones, and Ellet J. Waggoner were afterward attacked by voice and pen. Unprincipled men, who were unwilling to submit to counsel by Ellen White, decided to spread a smear campaign against both her and her son, W. C. White. In order to make her writings of none effect, they charged that she was just a tool in the hands of others, and her son told her what to write.

These attacks culminated, after the turn of the century, in wholesale lies spread by Dr. J. H. Kellogg and his associates, during and after their fight to gain control of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

Some of those written slurs are quoted today by secret writers critics, in an attempt to prove they are right.

Here is the account of a vision Ellen White had, shortly after the meetings at Minneapolis, which revealed the attitude of those men:

“I listened to words uttered that ought to make every one of those ashamed who uttered them. Sarcastic remarks were passed from one to another, ridiculing their brethren A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and Willie C. White, and myself. My position and my work were freely commented upon by those who ought to have been engaged in the work of humbling their souls before God and setting their own hearts in order. There was seemingly a fascination in brooding over imaginary wrongs and expressions of imagination of their brethren and their work, which had no foundation in truth, and in doubting and speaking and writing bitter things as the result of skepticism and question and unbelief.”—*Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 277.*

### URIAH SMITH

Some of the secret writers critics think that perhaps Uriah Smith wrote some of her writings. But, if that had occurred, Ellen White would surely have written very plain-spoken words to him. But such letters were never written.

Although she wrote a number of letters giving him advice, and warning him that he must make certain changes, yet she never said he was changing her words or writing articles or books over her name. No such letters were ever written. If Uriah Smith changed her writings, she would have protested; immediately, directly, repeatedly, strongly,—until he stopped doing it. Remember that she was careful to keep in her files a copy of every letter sent out.

The following letter was written about some of the men who, in bitterness of soul, fought Ellen White and her associates who were defending the righteousness by faith concept during and after Minneapolis.

“Responsibilities are borne by men who have had no living experience in the rise and progress of the work. Brother Amadon and Elder Smith have had this experience, but Elder Smith is ensnared by the enemy and cannot in his present state give the trumpet a certain sound. Elder Butler is in the same condition. They are both unable to help just where the help is needed. They have by their course made of none effect, with a large number of others, the messages of communication which the Lord has been giving His people the last forty-five years. The displeasure of God is upon them both, yet Elder Smith is placed in position as teacher to mold and fashion the minds of students when it is a well known fact that he is not standing in the light; he is not working in God’s order. He is sowing seeds of unbelief that spring up and bear fruit for some souls to harvest.”—*Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 714.

### THE 1911 GREAT CONTROVERSY

There are those who love to attack the book, *Great Controversy*, in one or more of its inspired editions. They are like the proverbial dog, mentioned in the Bible, who loves to eat vomit. The possibility they might be able to destroy its influence in the minds of the people fascinates them. They are under a satanic delusion.

Yet the great book stands, and how thankful the faithful are that it was written!

It is a book mercifully given to mankind by the God of heaven, to explain the past, teach basic principles needed now, and forewarn of a terrible coming crisis. (For much more on this, see the present writer’s

book, *The Editions of Great Controversy*, 504 pp., \$12.95 + \$3.00. It is filled with facts and data on the several editions of that book, plus a rather complete history of its writing.)

Here are sample statements by Ellen White about the inspiration and value of each of the four editions of *Great Controversy*:

**“Great Controversy should be very widely circulated. It contains the story of the past, the present, and the future. In its outline of the closing scenes of this earth’s history, it bears a powerful testimony in behalf of the truth. I am more anxious to see a wide circulation for this book than for any others I have written; for in *The Great Controversy*, the last message of warning to the world is given more distinctly than in any of my other books.”—Letter 281, 1905 (*Colporteur Ministry*, 127).**

### THE 1858 EDITION

“In this vision at Lovett’s Grove, much of the material of the great controversy which I had seen ten years before was repeated, and I was shown that I must write it out; that I should have to contend with the powers of darkness, for Satan would make strong efforts to hinder me, but angels of God would not leave me in the conflict, that in God must I put my trust.”—2 *Spiritual Gifts*, 272 (*Life Sketches*, 162 is almost identical. For the full story, read 162-163).

“In the sudden attack at Jackson [Michigan], Satan designed to take my life to hinder the work I was about to write; but angels of God were sent to raise me above the effect of Satan’s attack.”—2 *Spiritual Gifts*, 272 (*Life Sketches*, 163 is almost identical).

### THE 1884 EDITION

“I was shown . . . that I should devote myself to writing out the important matters for *Volume Four* [*Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 4 was the 1884 Edition of *Great Controversy*]; and that **the warning must go where the living messenger could not go, and that it would call the attention of many to the important events to occur in the closing scenes of the world’s history.**”—*Letter 1*, 1890 (*Colporteur Ministry*, 128).

**“I was moved by the Spirit of God to write that book, and while working upon it I felt a great burden upon my soul. I knew that time was short, that the scenes which are soon to crowd upon us would at the last come very suddenly and swiftly.”—Letter 1, 1890 (*Colporteur Ministry*, 127).**

# More About The Secret Writers Charge

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“I write from fifteen to twenty pages each day. It is now eleven o'clock, and I have written 14 pages of manuscript for *Volume Four* . . . As I write upon my book, I feel intensely moved. **I want to get it out as soon as possible**, for our people need it so much. I shall complete it next month if the Lord gives me health as He has done. I have been unable to sleep nights, for thinking of the important things to take place. Three hours and sometimes five is the most sleep I get. My mind is stirred so deeply I cannot rest. Write, write, write, I feel that I must, and not delay.”—*Letter 11, 1884 (February 19, 1984)*.

## THE 1888 EDITION

“About this time when the new [second] edition of *Volume Four* [the 1888 *Great Controversy*] came from the press, the new book, *Bible Readings*, was introduced. This book had a great sale, and has been permitted to swallow up every other interest. Canvassers found it an easy book to handle, and **Volume Four was kept out of the field**. I felt that this was not right. I knew that it was not right, because it was not in harmony with the light which God had given me.”—*B. L., 1890*.

“I do not demerit *Bible Readings*. It is a book which will do a great amount of good, but it can never take the place the Lord designed that *Volume Four* should have in the world and among our people. **I have spread before them the light of heaven in that book**.”—*E-25a, 1889*.

“**The keeping of *Great Controversy* from the field has done a work that men will have to answer for in the judgment**.”—*Manuscript 64, 1894*.

“For nearly two years the book [*Great Controversy*] containing warnings and instructions from the Lord, given especially for this time, has been lying in our publishing houses, and **no one feels the necessity or the importance of bringing it to the people**. Brethren, how long am I to wait for you to get the burden? Now *Volume One*, or *Patriarchs and Prophets*, is ready for circulation, but even for this book I would not allow *Volume Four* to remain longer as a light under a bushel. I am in sore distress of mind, but who of my brethren cares for this?

“Has the Lord moved upon my mind to prepare this work to be sent everywhere, and is He moving upon my brethren to devise plans which shall bar

the way so that the light which He has given me shall be hid in our publishing houses instead of shining forth to all who will receive it? . . . If the Lord has light for His people, who shall put up barriers so that the light shall not reach them?”—*B. L., 1890*.

“**Light was in that book which came from Heaven; but what account will those men have to give to God for the little faith and confidence manifested in that book that the warnings should not come to the people when they should have had them**.”—*O-55, 1894*.

## THE 1911 EDITION

“A few day ago I received a copy of the new edition of the book, *Great Controversy*, recently printed at Mountain View, and also a similar copy printed at Washington. The book pleases me. I have spent many hours looking through its pages, and I see that the publishers have done good work.”—*3 Selected Messages, 123*.

“**The book, *Great Controversy*, I appreciate above silver or gold, and I greatly desire that it shall come before the people**. While writing the manuscript of *The Great Controversy*, I was often conscious of the presence of the angels of God. And many times the scenes about which I was writing were presented to me anew in visions of the night, so that they were fresh and vivid in my mind.”—*W-55, 1911 (Letter 56, 1911, the second of the above two paragraphs is in Colporteur Ministry, 128)*.

“Recently it was necessary for the book to be reset because the electrotype plates were badly worn. It has cost me much to have this done, but I do not complain, for whatever the cost may be, I regard the edition with great satisfaction . . .

“When I learned that *Great Controversy* must be reset, I determined that we would have everything closely examined, to see if the truths it contained were stated in the very best manner, to convince those not of our faith that the Lord had guided and sustained me in the writing of its pages.

“As a result of the thorough examination by our most experienced workers, some changing in the wording has been proposed. These changes I have carefully examined, and approved. I am thankful that my life has been spared, and that I have strength and clearness of mind for this and other literary work.”—*W-56, 1911 (Letter 56, 1911), July 25, 1911 (3 Selected Messages, 123-124)*.

### THE BOOK THAT CAN CHANGE LIVES

**“The results of the circulation of this book [Great Controversy] are not to be judged by what now appears. By reading it some souls will be aroused and will have courage to unite themselves at once with those who keep the commandments of God. But a much larger number of those who read it will not take their position until they see the very events taking place that are foretold in it. The fulfillment of some of the predictions will inspire faith that others will also come to pass, and when the earth is lightened with the glory of the Lord in the closing work, many souls will take their position on the commandments of God as the result of this agency.”—Manuscript 31, 1890 (Colporteur Ministry, 128-129).**

“As the spirit of God has opened to my mind the great truths of His Word, and the scenes of the past and the future, I have been bidden to make known to others that which has thus been revealed—to trace the history of the controversy in past ages, and especially so to present it as to shed a light on the fast-approaching struggle of the future.”—*Great Controversy*, xi.

Three facts stand out: (1) *Great Controversy* is the most important book for these last days. (2) Satan hates it more than any other book. (3) It has been the most reviled and slandered of any of the Spirit of Prophecy books. Why?

Here are three more facts: (1) All editions of *Great Controversy* are equally inspired. (2) Give the book to the people, in whichever edition you prefer—but give it to them. (3) The book provides the reader with the issues and warnings he needs just now. The deceptions and events of the future are unveiled, and—before he lays down the book at its last page—these bring him personally to the brink of eternity to make his own life decision.

Here are additional comments, many of them about the 1888 or 1911 editions (which the critics frequently declare to be especially worthless):

“Scenes of such thrilling, solemn interest passed before me as no language is adequate to describe. It was all a living reality to me, for close upon this scene appeared the great white cloud, upon which was seated the Son of man.”—*Letter 38, 1888 (1 Selected Messages, 76)*.

“The Lord has set before me matters which are of urgent importance for the present time, and which reach into the future. The words have been spoken in a charge to me, ‘Write in a book the things which thou hast seen and heard, and let it go to all the people; for the time is at hand when past history will be repeated.’ I have been aroused at one, two, or three o’clock in the morning with some point forcibly impressed upon my mind, as if spoken by the voice of God.”—*Letter 1, 1890 (Colporteur Ministry, 128)*.

“Sister White is not the originator of these

books. They contain the instruction that during her lifework God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously given His servant to be given to the world.”—*Colporteur Ministry, 125*.

“While writing the manuscript of *The Great Controversy*, I was often conscious of the presence of the angels of God. And many times the scenes about which I was writing were presented to me anew in visions of the night, so that they were fresh and vivid in my mind.”—*Letter 56, 1911 (Colporteur Ministry, 128)*.

### ELLEN WHITE KNEW

Ellen White did not believe her editors were changing her words. She knew what was taking place at all times.

“I have a large amount of matter which I desire to have come before the people, but I have no one to consider these matters with me. If I could have Sister Peck and Willie, I could get off many important things much more perfectly. I ought to have someone to whom I can read every article before sending it to the mail. This always helps the writer; for the writer, after reading the matter before one who is interested, often discerns more clearly what is wanted, and the slight changes that should be made. It is an important matter to keep in its simplicity all that matter which I write. I am sure my editors endeavor to preserve my words, not supplying their own in the place of them.”—*Letter 76, 1897, 1-2 (to George A. Irwin, July 22, 1897)*.

The One who manipulated her writings:

“There are those who say, ‘Someone manipulates her writings.’ I acknowledge the charge. It is One who is mighty in counsel, One who presents before me the condition of things.”—*Letter 52, 1906*.

### PEOPLE DESTROYING THEMSELVES

This devastating secret writers charge leads people to feel they can pick and choose what are the words of the prophet and what are not. This makes the deception all the more deadly. It destroys the ability of the Spirit of Prophecy to rescue the person, who believes the secret writers charge, from any error. If someone gives them a statement which contradicts this theory, or anything else they believe, they just say, “That must be one of those statements that people changed.”

But what did she say about picking and choosing which statement is true and which is not?

“I have my work to do, to meet the misconceptions of those who suppose themselves able to say what is testimony from God and what is human production. If those who have done this work continue in this course, satanic agencies will choose for them.”—*3 Selected Messages, 70*.

When men pass the boundary, there is nothing more that God can do for them.

“What reserve power has the Lord with which to reach those who have cast aside His warnings and reproofs, and have accredited the testimonies of the Spirit of God to no higher source than human wisdom? In the judgment, what can you who have done this, offer to God as an excuse for turning from the evidences He has given you that God was in the work?”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 465-466.

“There is One back of me which is the Lord, who has prompted the message which you now reject and disregard and dishonor. By tempting God you have unnerved yourselves, and confusion and blindness of mind has been the result.”—*Letter 16, 1888 (3 Selected Messages, 69)*.

“When Professor I [letter “I”] came, I put to him a few pointed questions, more to learn how he regarded the condition of things than to obtain information. I felt that the crisis had come. Had Elder H, and those united with him, been standing in the light, they would have recognized the voice of warning and reproof; but he calls it a human work, and casts it aside. The work he is doing he will wish undone ere long. He is weaving a net around himself that he cannot easily break. This is not my opinion.

“What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? You have, by your own course, closed every avenue whereby the Lord would reach you. Will He raise one from the dead to speak to you?

“In the testimonies sent to Battle Creek, I have given you the light God has given to me.”—*Testimony for the Battle Creek Church, 50-58 (1882) (3 Selected Messages, 69-70)*.

### HOW INSPIRATION OPERATES

We quoted part of this passage earlier; but now, in view of all we have considered, it becomes all the more meaningful. In the introduction to *Great Controversy*, we are told how Inspiration works:

“The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers.”—*Great Controversy, Introduction, v*.

This is an important point. If God gave the writers of the Bible the very words that they were to say, then why did they each write in their own style? God gave them the thoughts, the ideas, the visions, and they put the truths God had taught them into their own words.

“The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God’ (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men.”—*Ibid.*

How could that be clearer?

“The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language.”—*Ibid.*

“Have themselves embodied the thought in human language.”

“The ten commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that ‘the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ John 1:14.”—*Op. cit., v-vi*.

There is “a wide contrast in style” because men did the writing; in most instances, the Scriptures were not dictated. (The “Thus saith the Lord” passages would be an obvious exception.)

“Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony.

“As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of a subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind—a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life.

“God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language; yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth.”—*Great*

*Controversy, Introduction, vi-vii.*

**AN ATTACK  
ON THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY  
IS AN ATTACK ON THE BIBLE**

The charges made against the Spirit of Prophecy are equally applicable to the Bible.

Those who promote the secret writers charge in the Spirit of Prophecy do so by pointing out words have been changed in the later books, from what they were in the earlier ones. The inference is that someone has changed the writings.

Ellen White was a living writer. She would take materials, written in earlier years, and rework them later on. Every writer who turns out voluminous quantities of material does that.

In addition, at different times she would write material on the same subject from various standpoints, with different audiences and purposes in mind.

The same method of attack, which searches for varied words,—could also be used against the Bible. If so done, it would show similar changes:

What did the devil say to Jesus in this temptation?" All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt 4:9) or "All this power will I give thee and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Luke 4:6-7)? What really happened? Did someone change the words and the order of what was written? Or did the two authors tell the story in their own words?

When Jesus healed Peter's wife's mother, how did He do it? Did He take her by the hand and lift her up, and the fever left her (Mark 1:31) or did He touch her hand and the fever left her (Matt 8:15)? Or did He stand over her and rebuke the fever and it left her (Luke 4:39)?

The next morning when He refused to go back to Capernaum, did He say: "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth" (Mark 1:38) or "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43)? Did someone change the words? Or does the inspired writer state things in his own words?

When Christ, in the synagogue, healed the man with the withered hand, did He say: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil, to save life or to kill" (Mark 3:4)? Or did He say, "What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much, then, is a man better than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days" (Matt 12:11-12). Or did He say, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil? to save a life or to destroy it"

(Luke 6:9)? Who changed what? Or were part of His words left out? Who had the right to do that?

In the sermon on the mount did Jesus say, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt 5:48) or "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful (Luke 6:36)"? The whole sermon on the mount sounds different in the two versions; but, if you read the whole thing, it is obvious it is the same sermon. Who changed the words? Whole sections are left out. Who had the right to do that? Did someone change the Bible?

Again, in Mark 4 and Matthew 13, we have two accounts of another sermon. Once again, some of the words vary. Who could have changed the words of Jesus or left out some of them?

The morning after Jesus stilled the sea, He healed the Gadarene demoniac—or was it demoniacs? In Mark and Luke, there is one of them. But Matthew says there were two. (See Mark 5:1-3 and Luke 8:26-27, compared with Matthew 8:28.) Did someone change the Bible? Or did God allow the apostles to tell the story as they remembered it?

Such things are found all the way through the Gospels. If some changes of wording in the Spirit of Prophecy are a sign that the later books are not trustworthy, then what are you going to do with the Gospels? You might as well throw them out too.

Would it not be better to recognize that Ellen White is correct in what she says: Human authors were given dreams and visions, and then allowed to express them in their own words. Sometimes they were just given experiences and, then, told by the Holy Spirit to share their memories. They obviously varied in the presentation of a few details.

Can we trust the Holy Spirit to make sure the essentials are clear and accurate? Of course we can.

Was it even possible and proper for them to tell the whole thing, under some circumstances, and leave out part under others? Was it proper for them to use some words at one time and change the words at another time. If the words were their own, then why not? Either we accept what Ellen White says about Inspiration or the Bible is a real problem too.

Once we understand how Inspiration works, then none of these things are problems. All of the writings are inspired and profitable. And anything that breaks down faith in them is causing harm to people

"Sister White is not the originator of these books.

They contain the instruction that during her lifework God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously given His servant to be given to the world. From their pages this light is to shine into the hearts of men and women, leading them to the Saviour."—*Colporteur Evangelist*, 36.