

The Secret Writers' Charge

No one else wrote Ellen White's Writings - and no one changed them

PART ONE OF TWO

The ironic truth. The theory begins with the assumption that someone else changed the Spirit of Prophecy writings to suit themselves. Those who accept this devastating error - try to do it themselves! Fallible men and women are changing the Spirit of Prophecy writings to suit their own opinions of what they should be. Words, sentences, and even whole chapters and books are being discarded.

Evolutionists know wherein lies the strength of their theory. Evolutionists claim to know what happened long ago. It is difficult to answer this challenge, since none of us were alive back then.

The strength of the secret writers' charge is the same: It claims to know events which occurred in the past, when none of us were alive.

Yet there are underlying principles involved in the claims, which, when considered, reveal their fallacy.

Basic premises. Several of the following basic premises must be accepted, in order to accept this theory:

- God does not care about His Inspired Writings and has not protected them.
- Ellen White did not know her writings were being changed, and God—who was always otherwise careful to instruct her what to write—did not bother to tell her they were being changed by other people.
- Ellen White did know the changes were being made, but was too meek and yielding to put a stop to it. She had a personality made of putty.
- Ellen White knew that changes were being made, but did not consider it important enough to stop the ongoing corruption of her writings.
- Ellen White just did not care what happened to them.
- God permitted it to happen. He well-knew that if it occurred, it would produce a terrible loss of confidence in her writings, but He did not care.
- God was not wise or powerful enough to stop it from happening.
- God does not really care about His Word.

There are several other premises which must also be accepted, if we are to accept the secret writers' charge:

- When we read a passage in God's Word, any-

thing we disagree with must be wrong.

- We are well able to improve on everything we read in the Spirit of Prophecy.
- We have the ability to correct and change it.
- We have a right to change it, and we should change it.
- We help others when we change those writings, and encourage others to do so too.

Obviously, only God has the authority to correct His Word. Those of us who try to usurp that authority actually make little popes of ourselves. It is because the pope of Rome tried to change God's Word, that Scripture predicted he would try to make himself God, sitting in the temple of God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

The anti-christ principle. When men decide they are capable of dissecting the Word of God, they have made themselves into little gods. But we are basically rejecting the words of God. We distrust God, for we distrust what He has done. The Spirit of Prophecy, just as it reads, is not good enough for us. We demand that it be improved upon, and we believe we are well able to do it. In attempting this, we set ourselves above the God of heaven.

An insolence like that of the papacy. This is exactly what Rome did, when it decided it was not satisfied to reject the Bible Sabbath which God had given and substitutes a different day in its place.

The popes did not believe God did it right, when He gave mankind the Sabbath. So they changed it. They omitted the second commandment and changed the fourth. Those who accept the secret writers' charge actually do not believe God gave the Spirit of Prophecy right, so they dare to omit sections and change words to read a better way.

Rome presumed to usurp the functions of God; and men today, in trying to pick and choose and rewrite the Spirit of Prophecy, are doing the same thing.

By accepting the secret writers' charge, men decide they can no longer rely on God or on His inspired messenger. They must strike out on their own and work over, what they consider to be, the scraps of inspired words before them and come up with a better volume of Scripture.

Copy-cattling Lucifer. Lucifer in heaven did es-

essentially the same thing. “God did not make the law right,” he charged. “I intend to improve on it.” But God’s holy law is part of His Word; it is an expression of what He is. In trying to destroy confidence in and obedience to God’s law, Lucifer wanted to make himself the object to be worshiped.

When men today accept the secret writers’ charge, they either make themselves into gods or they look to another to redo Scripture for them; and the one they look to becomes their god.

This effect is inevitable, for whenever we set something else above God’s Word, of that we do make a god.

The garden deception. Adam and Eve, in the garden, had everything. But they chose to disbelieve the Word of God. When men accept the secret writers’ charge, they also choose to disbelieve the Word of God. The results are equally disastrous. Whereas these men once had full confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy writings, henceforth they no longer are sure what to believe. Every time they open the books, they do so with doubt, wondering what is believable, what must be rejected, and what was changed.

What this theory leads to. We are told that some changes have been made in the Spirit of Prophecy. Not knowing where they all are, we start looking. The more we search, the more we seem to find them. Everything becomes suspect. If we remain in this path, we eventually join those ahead of us who have decided that most of her books are suspect, cannot be trusted, and should be discarded.

When the initial excitement wears off, it becomes tiring to keep searching for errors. So we just close the books entirely.

This is higher criticism. The secret writers’ charge is based on the very same logic and approach as is used by deadly higher criticism, which began in Germany a century ago. More on this later.

Fundamental ways to deal with these charges.

1 - Be loyal to the one who has been so good to you. Lucifer in heaven impeached God’s wisdom, motives, goodness, character, and law. It was his word against God’s; which was right?

The solution was simple enough. The word of which one had always brought them cheer and happiness, and provided for every need? —It was God’s Word, not Lucifer’s.

These men who come to you, telling you to discard whole Spirit of Prophecy books,—yet what did they ever do to help you *as those books have*, over the years, which they now tell you to throw away?

The same principle would have guided Adam and Eve to a correct decision.

2 - Trust God and His Word. Here was Lucifer and here was God. The charges Lucifer raised were

new and, frankly, somewhat confusing. What should the angels do? Once again, the answer was simple enough: Trust God and His Word! God and His Word are their own evidence, their own *raison d’être* (their own reason for existence; pardon me for using a French phrase, but no English one says it quite as well).

What should Adam and Eve have done in the Garden? Trust God and His Word, even if it appeared they were doubting their own senses or reasoning powers to do so.

Trust God and His Word, even when we are not sure about the darkness and puzzlement about us. Trust God and His Word!

3 - Not only believe, but obey God’s Word. Take it as it reads and obey it. Trust your life to the One who died to save you. Do not be false-hearted. Be a humble disciple, not a doubting rebel.

When Eve accepted the suggestion of the snake, she imagined herself lifted into a new, higher realm of experience. The serpent promised her better, more exalted knowledge. Accepting the lie, she did receive a new experience, but it was neither exalted nor pleasant.

Heretofore, she had peace of heart with the Word of God. But henceforth she was to be plagued with doubts, fears, and worries. Is that the kind of life you want? Depart from these Spirit of Prophecy critics, and take your loved ones with you.

Those men who love to attack the Spirit of Prophecy destroy souls. Before their arrival, a believer would come to the Spirit of Prophecy writings as a child to its darling mother. But henceforth, he is racked with worries each time he opens the books. He is soon reading less in them. Gradually, at the suggestion of the critics, more and more Spirit of Prophecy books are eliminated from his library.

When we choose to trust God and His Word, we have peace of heart. When we choose the secret writers’ charge, all we get is a temporary excitement as Satan places the chains of control on our minds. He laughs, for he has won another victim.

It is with difficulty that you can pull someone away from this delusion. When a person is willing to give a higher allegiance to a man than to the Spirit of Prophecy books, a terrific deceptive power follows.

Example: Go to someone who has accepted the secret writers’ charge, and try to show him a passage in the Spirit of Prophecy which disproves that error. He will reply, “Well, she didn’t write that! That is one of those things someone else wrote!”

What a misery! That poor soul has arrived at the point where he will reject that which alone can free him from Satan’s snare. What he is doing is rejecting God’s appointed agency for his salvation.

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That is a dangerous thing to do!

The sin against the Holy Spirit. Are we here discussing a variant of the sin against the Holy Spirit? Recall that which doomed King Saul. He arrived at a point in his life when he was careful to avoid God's prophet, Samuel. But that rejection led him to a willingness to consult with demons in order to relieve his mind. Saul's rejection of God's Inspired messages led to his destruction.

A key word here is "absolute." God is absolutely true, absolutely trustworthy,—and so is His Word.

But we live in a world today that is nihilistic. People today are antagonistic to truth; and, under the banner of "relative truth," they oppose the truth of God.

Everything is said to be relative; nothing absolute—no standards, no solid truth, no trustworthy authority, and no God. Your opinion is the authority, the standard in everything. This spirit is in the very air we breathe today. This is the spirit found in the secret writers' charge.

The humble child of God accepts the Spirit of Prophecy just as it reads. He accepts it as absolute truth.

Yet the one caught up in the secret writers' charge views the Spirit of Prophecy as only containing partial truths,—which do not become absolute until he, the reader, in his great wisdom changes portions and discards others.

When you, reader, do this,—you have made yourself into a rebel like Lucifer who kept doubting God's Word until he arrived at the point where there was no one in heaven he could trust. He only had himself to rely on. But, in his estimation, that was all right because he considered himself very capable. He had become his own god.

You too can become a little god. It is not really difficult to do. Just believe the words of the "serpents" who tell you to distrust God and His Word.

How to know when you are headed for trouble.

How can you tell when you are beginning to accept a false theory someone has suggested? *One test is this:* When you can no longer accept the entire Spirit of Prophecy writings, your new theory is wrong. *When you have to reject or change Spirit of Prophecy statements, in order to support your theory,—you are deceiving yourself and your final end will be a terrible one* if you do not immediately acknowledge your error and abandon it.

Once you accept the secret writers' charge, you have started on the downward path. Your faith and trust in God's Word alone is at an end. You can no longer approach God directly through His Word. Henceforth, you need someone to interpret the Spirit

of Prophecy for you,—or you have to muddle along and try to do it yourself. You continually wonder which pages are safe to read.

Those who accept this error tend to dry up like a prune. Those who adhere to the secret writers' charge, tend to drop out of active Spirit of Prophecy study and publication. There are a few exceptions to this, but not many.

Indeed, even those secret writers' advocates which do publish, primarily focus on attacks against the books.

It is dangerous to reject the Spirit of Prophecy, when once you have trusted it. It is one thing to only know about the Bible, but it is quite another to have known the wonderful writings of the Spirit of Prophecy and then turn against most of them. Those who do this, place themselves on dangerous ground; and angels cannot guard skeptics as they can God's faithful, believing ones.

Having already set aside most of the Spirit of Prophecy books, many eventually just give up everything and go on out into the world. By rejecting the Spirit of Prophecy, they have severed their strong connection with God.

Which Spirit of Prophecy books are rejected?

Some reject everything written after 1884 (over 90% of the Spirit of Prophecy books were written after that time). Others reject everything written after 1858. Still others accept only the tract, "*Word to the Little Flock.*"

It is said that changes were made in the Spirit of Prophecy books. Who is said to have made those changes? Here are some of the varied and discordant charges: Some think that her son, William C. White, changed and rewrote entire books. Others claim that Uriah Smith changed and rewrote entire books. Still others think that perhaps her helpers changed and rewrote entire books.

Those are the charges.

The charges claim that a lot of changing, re-writing, and new writing was done, without the notice of God or Ellen White. Quite obviously, in order for that to happen, both Ellen White and God had to be quite negligent of what was taking place. For example, Volumes 7, 8, and 9 of the *Testimonies* were published in 1902, 1904, and 1909. Yet the critics charge that W. C. White or Uriah Smith wrote those books and published them.

Can anyone really believe that those books were written, printed, and widely sold—without the knowledge of Ellen White and God? Can anyone believe that those busy men had time to write entire books, do it totally secretly, and then publish them secretly, without the books ever coming to the attention of God or Ellen White?

Is not such thinking a little foolish? The secret writers' charge is wholly imaginary and without ground to stand on.

It is also charged that the greater portion of the Spirit of Prophecy books, published after 1884, were heavily rewritten or changed before publication. Do you really think God would have permitted this to occur? Do you really think that the angel would not have told Ellen White to put a stop to it before it could get started?

Did the Lord protect the Bible for 2,000 years and more, and not the Spirit of Prophecy for 150 years?

These charges are both baseless and senseless.

In order for others to add to or change those writings, several of the following criteria would have to be true. *Let us review them again:*

- Ellen White did not know her writings were being changed, and God—who was careful to tell her what to write—did not tell her they were being changed.

- Ellen White did know the changes were being made, but was too meek and yielding to put a stop to it.

- Ellen White knew that changes were being made, but did not consider it important enough to stop it from continuing.

- Ellen White approved of others changing her writings.

- Ellen White just did not care what happened to them.

- God permitted it to happen. He well-knew that if it occurred, it would produce a terrible loss of confidence in her writings, but He did not care.

- God was not wise or powerful enough to stop it from happening.

- God does not really care about His Word. He does not care about His Inspired Writings and has never protected them.

How can we have certainty that we have the true, correct Spirit of Prophecy writings?

Read again the above list. **The charges require that either Ellen White or God did not care about God's Word, was unable to protect it, or did not care to protect it.**

Candidly ask yourself: Would God have allowed men to change those books? Would Ellen White have allowed it?

First, would God have known if it were to happen? Of course He would. He has all knowledge.

Second, would God have wanted to prevent

the corruption of Scripture to occur? He very definitely would. The Lord would know that, if He permitted Scripture to be ruined, mankind would have no way to know His will or the pathway to heaven.

Third, would God have prevented Scripture to be ruined? Yes, He would. We have evidence from the history of the transmission of the Bible down through the centuries that, although a few copyist mistakes occurred from time to time (Ellen White says that happened), none of them affected any crucial teaching in the plan of salvation.

So, in answer to the question, "Would God have allowed men to change the Spirit of Prophecy writings so we could no longer trust them?" we can say this: If He would have permitted that to happen we could not trust the Bible either.

Fourth, would Ellen White have allowed men to change her writings, if she knew about it?

Of course, she would not have permitted this to happen.

But that leads us to two questions:

(1) Would Ellen White have known when such tampering was occurring? There are indications in her writings that, when attempts were made to do so, she immediately took action to stop it. (More on this later in this book.)

(2) Would Ellen White have been able to put a stop to such tampering? From comments she made, we know that when such attempts were close to occurring, she immediately took action to stop it. In each case, this was done.

(3) What if her efforts to stop tampering had been of no avail? She would then have taken the next step: She would have gone public and told Advent believers everywhere what was being attempted.

You will recall that, following the 1888 Minneapolis meeting, a large number of leading brethren were lined up against her. That did not daunt her in the least. Ellen White was no timid rubber stamp. She took her case publicly to the people, holding meetings in various places, informing them of the problem, and winning them to her side. Whether or not they wanted to, within two years church leaders capitulated.

If she did that about the message of righteousness by faith, then how much more certainly she would have done it if the leaders had decided to start changing her writings or writing new books under her name.

(4) But what if Ellen White did not know that others were changing her writings or writing entire books (as is now being charged!) without her

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knowledge?

First, of course she would have known this,—for she had many contacts and faithful friends.

Located in all our institutions, publishing houses, and churches, they would have told her.

Second, even if no man told her about what was done secretly in the darkest corner of night,—the God of heaven would have told her! *If you do not believe that, then you do not believe in the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy.* We have abundant evidence that God instructed her about everything she needed to know,—even when the brethren gave her erroneous reports.

Can the types of charges, which are leveled against the Spirit of Prophecy, also be directed at the Bible and its writers?

Yes, every single false charge which men have brought against the Spirit of Prophecy and Ellen White can be brought against the Bible and its writers.

When Walter Rea spoke to a large audience of Adventists in an auditorium near Walla Walla College, after completing his talk he was about to sit down. But then he was impressed to walk back to the microphone and say this, “Now don’t you do to the Bible what I have just done to Ellen White’s writings.”

Walter Rea knew that the same charges of plagiarism (which we have solidly proven to be false; see our book *Ellen White Did Not Plagiarize*, 84 pp., \$8.00 + \$1.50 p&h) which he leveled against the Spirit of Prophecy, could be leveled (just as falsely) against the Bible.

God lets the critics accuse all they want. It reveals what they are like, and they will answer for it in the judgment. But He carefully protects His Word.

What would be the effect if such changes actually did occur? Later in this book, we will quote Ellen White’s statement that the effect would be disastrous and all confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy writings would be lost. —Yet men today dare to stand up and try to destroy the confidence of Advent believers in those hallowed writings!

Men, women, young people, and children listen attentively in the audience,—and leave with their faith in God’s Word partially or fully shattered. I surely would not want to be in the shoes of such critics in the great day of God’s judgment when He punishes those who have tried to slay the bodies, or destroy the faith, of His followers.

Why are some people inclined to accept the secret writers’ charge? *This attack by Satan is aimed directly at historic Adventists who deeply love the Spirit of Prophecy.* Over the years, these folk have lamented the changes introduced into our denomination which are eroding confidence in our historic beliefs and standards. So, when charges are made that leaders, a century earlier, unscrupulously changed the Spirit of Prophecy writings, some consider it a plausible possibility. Yet, as we have observed, upon careful consideration, it is neither plausible nor possible. Neither God nor Ellen White would have let it happen. It did not happen.

Is there another reason why some would accept such a charge? Unfortunately, there are also folk looking for an excuse not to believe the Spirit of Prophecy. Frankly, those writings powerfully reprove sin, and do so in detail. Some consider very helpful any excuse for setting the books aside.

Is there another way we can be certain that such changes were not made? Yes, a powerful one. We can know it did not happen because we have the Spirit of Prophecy books. Opening those books, we do not find evidence of such change.

Men can claim that terrible errors have been inserted into those precious writings, but upon examination, we do not find the terrible errors! Nowhere.

“But these men claim that the Spirit of Prophecy books are full of terrible errors! They say they have researched hundreds of them.” Those men are not telling you the truth. Upon examination, you will find that the so-called “errors” which they presume to have found—are not errors at all. They are generally either variations in wording from other passages, or said to be errors when they are not.

“What is one of the strongest evidences, given by the critics, that her writings were changed?” Ellen White’s use of the word, “sacrament.” The critics charge that this was word could not have been in the original, since it means something which is doctrinally wrong.

Because this is one of the very, very few examples of possible inserted errors in the Spirit of Prophecy, let us examine it:

First, here are passages in which the word is used:

“Judas the betrayer was present at the sacramental service. He received from Jesus the emblems of His broken body and His spilled blood.”—*Desire of Ages*, 653:4.

“From the sacramental supper he [Judas] went out to complete the work of betrayal.”—*Desire of Ages*, 655:1.

“The administration of the Sacrament was to keep before the disciples the infinite sacrifice made for each of them individually as a part of the great whole of fallen humanity.”—*Desire of Ages*, 659:0.

“All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice. The light shining from that Communion service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament.”—*Desire of Ages*, 660:3.

The charge is that “sacrament” could not have been in the original manuscript, because the word is doctrinal and means: (1) transubstantiation (the changing of the elements into the actual body and blood of Christ), and/or (2) the Lord’s Supper is one of a specified number of required “sacraments” which you must receive from the priest for salvation.

We agree that, in certain denominations, these are two of the meanings of the word, sacrament. But, the critics do not realize (or do not want to admit) that “sacrament” has another, broader meaning which is both very ancient and has been used by many churches. It is this: The word, “sacrament,” means an actual object or action which symbolizes a deeply spiritual concept. If you will carefully read the above quotations and all of *Desire of Ages*, 659-660, you will see that Ellen White carefully adheres to that definition of the word. An “emblem” is an object which symbolizes something else.

Notice in *Desire of Ages* 660, quoted above, that this definition causes even our daily meals to become sacraments! Even the food we eat symbolizes Christ’s sacrifice for us! No priests are around when we do that and, of course, no transubstantiation.

Of the original 16th century Reformers, only Ulrich Zwingli taught the correct view on the Lord’s Supper. He taught exactly what Ellen White teaches in *Desire of Ages*, 659-660. Yet Zwingli also spoke of it as a sacrament. He was doing this in the same sense that Ellen White did: as an object or action which symbolized a spiritual truth.

“In his *Exposition of the Faith*, Zwingli defines the sacraments as ‘signs and symbols of holy things, but not . . . the things of which they are the signs’ (p. 247) . . . By the bread and wine ‘Christ is Himself as it were set before our eyes, so that not merely with the ear, but with eye and palate we see and taste that Christ whom the soul bears within itself and in whom it rejoices’ (p. 248).”—*Ulrich Zwingli, quoted in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Historical Theology: An Introduction*, p. 288.

“Since the human nature has ascended, Christ’s body is not eaten naturally and literally [transubstantiation], much less quantitatively. It is eaten sacramentally [symbolically] and spiritually (p. 257).”—*Ibid.*

“The sacrament as a pledge binds us together as ‘one body by the sacramental partaking of His body, for we are one body with Him.’ The saying, ‘This is My body’ must be taken as a metonymy [the use of a word to represent or symbolize something else], meaning ‘This is the sacrament of my body,’ or ‘This is My sacramental or mystical body—the sacramental and representative symbol of the body which I really assumed and yielded over to death’ (p. 265).”—*Op. cit.*, p. 289.

The above passages clearly show that Zwingli used the word, “sacrament,” for the Lord’s Supper; and by it he meant the ancient meaning of the word. For more evidence of this, see *Bengt Hagglund, History of Theology*, p. 257:0-1.

The ancient meaning of “sacrament” has nothing to do with the error (devised by certain theologians in later centuries) of (1) transubstantiation or (2) the Lord’s Supper from a priest as a requirement for salvation. Here is the ancient meaning of the word, “sacrament,” which was carried down through the centuries and used by Zwingli and Ellen White:

“Originally Latin *sacramentum* meant a soldier’s oath of allegiance, but in Christian usage it became the equivalent of the Greek *mysterion*, a mystery . . . Sacraments involve or imply a promise or a commitment, and they are mysteries in the sense that they do not disclose their meaning to unbelieving eyes.”—*Alan Richardson, Dictionary of Christian Theology*, p. 300 (cf. pp. 116-120).

Quoted below are the four definitions of “sacrament”:

“Sacrament 1. A Christian rite considered to be outward visible signs of inner spiritual grace. **2.** Consecrated bread and wine. **3.** Something considered to have a sacred character or significance. **4.** One or more of seven sacraments recognized by the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and some Anglican churches as having special doctrinal significance.”—*Macmillan Dictionary*.

We would agree with the first definition (it is a visible sign of an inner experience with Christ), the second (the bread and wine are prayed over for the occasion), and the third (it has a sacred significance). But we would not agree with the fourth definition which has its origins in a papal error.

What then is the problem with Ellen White’s use of the word? Nothing at all. The problem is the critics’ misconception, that “sacrament” could only mean the fourth definition whereas Ellen White correctly

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understood it the way primitive (pure) Christians did.

Warning: Those who accept the secret writers' charge about the Spirit of Prophecy have no reason to believe that the Bible is any less corrupt. If God can not protect the Spirit of Prophecy books, He did not protect the Bible either.

Souls are going to be lost because they have accepted and taught this fatal error, that the Spirit of Prophecy books are not to be implicitly trusted and obeyed. Yet they will be lost by their own choice; remember that. No one forced them to bow down to this error. By their own free will, they chose to do so. In the final Judgment, when they must answer for their own soul and other souls they have ruined, they will acknowledge this.

Fortunately, there is still time to repent and return to the Lord. It is a humiliating thing to bow in submission to God and His Word, but there is no other avenue by which we may be saved.

Unless you and I, *who know about the Spirit of Prophecy books*, implicitly trust and obey the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, we will be lost.

If I can bow down and, by the enabling grace of Christ, obey the Word of God, then you can also. You are neither stronger nor weaker than I am. Obedience is by grace; but the obedience must be there, or the grace is useless.

No one will be saved who knowingly rejects the Spirit of Prophecy and teaches others to do the same.

What is in Volumes 7, 8, and 9 of Testimonies that is wrong? One of the many charges is that someone else wrote those books. We ought to be able to find erroneous teachings there, but we do not find them.

What about Great Controversy? That book is attacked by the critics more than any other. Of course, this is to be expected, since it unveils the devices of Satan more clearly than any other book ever written! Read again chapter 37 (*The Scriptures a Safeguard*). If others had worked over that book, as the critics charge, chapter 37 would have been omitted.

If changes were made in the Spirit of Prophecy, we should be able to predict what they would be. If you were a church leader and wanted to change the Spirit of Prophecy, what changes would you make?

I will tell you one type of change that definitely would be made. And it would be inserted in many different places in all of the "changed books."

Statements like this would be inserted:

"You need to appreciate church leaders more, and submit to their decisions. They are wiser than

you are.

"The Bible is a good book, yet it needs interpretation. Only the leaders of the church are able to provide the people of God with the correct interpretation.

"It is more than merely 'brethren of experience' that we need to counsel with; we will find that the higher the position held by a church leader, the wiser and more trustworthy he has become. We can go to him in full assurance that his counsel will be wise. He will not fail you in your hour of need.

"Trust church leaders. They can give you help beyond that which you could ever find in Scripture.

"Never begin or engage in missionary work of any type without first consulting with the appropriate church leaders. If they tell you to abandon the project, you should immediately do so. The saving of souls is of far less consequence than obeying leadership."

Search as you might, you will never find such concepts in either the Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy. The absence of such popery-type remarks provides eloquent proof that all the Inspired Writings were never changed

—Yet the secret writers' charge *is itself* papal in its intent! The charge by fallible humans, based on ridiculous premises that Scripture is not trustworthy, requires that we place the opinions ("traditions," if you will) of men above it. We must look to men for guidance instead of to God's Word. That is papal.

The heart of the secret writers' charge is doubt of God's Word and distrust of His care for that Word. Those who want to live with their doubts will die with their doubts. And they will have only themselves to blame for the harvest of lost souls who have followed their example.

The secret writers' charge is actually higher criticism. Here, briefly, is the story behind that devastating attack on God's holy Word:

Although this 19th-century German attack was directed toward the Bible, yet the method of attack is essentially the same as that used by the current secret writers' charge against the Spirit of Prophecy.

Georg Hegel (1770-1831) carried liberal thought into a new direction. He introduced the concept of evolution into history and religion. His idea of two opposing forces (the *thesis* and *antithesis*), producing a final blend (*synthesis*), got other minds thinking that each portion of the Bible was not merely written once,—but written by some, then changed by others; and the synthesis is our tattered Bible today.

Hegelian philosophy strongly influenced Ferdinand C. Baur (1792-1860) and Julius Wellhausen

(1844-1918) in their critical studies of the Bible. Higher criticism was thus born, in which previously accepted views of Bible authorship were questioned. The impact of the Wellhausen school was devastating to modern Christianity, just as the effect of Herman Hoehn's strange theory, now called the secret writers' charge, is destroying many Adventist believers today.

Baur, at the University of Tubingen, developed a historical-critical method (which he called a "tendency theory") for New Testament study, based on Hegelian principles. He looked for contradictory elements (words and phrases) to support his theory, which was this: Some people wrote part of each section, to which others, who did not agree with his views, would then add or change them (sound familiar?). The result was a book written, in conflict, by overlapping writers and redactors who disagreed with one another. His theory led Baur to conclude the New Testament was not divinely inspired after all; so he and his followers in Europe and America rejected historic New Testament doctrines.

Whereas Baur focused on Paul and Peter's writings, David Strauss (1808-1974), a student of Baur, worked on the Gospels, and decided various men wrote, rewrote, changed, and modified them. Strauss' multiple writers' attack led him to declare that the Bible was filled with "myths." He said that, since one man wrote a portion, and then another came along and changed and added some more, there probably never lived a real person called "Jesus." Harnack and Kaftan at the School of Ritschl amplified and spread Baur's theories more widely.

Adolph Von Harnack (1851-1930) decided that Greek thinking had been interwoven into the Gospels. Can you see how similar that is to Herman Hoehn and Vern Bate's theory, that W. C. White and other church leaders interwove their ideas into Ellen White's books?

Jean Astruc (1684-1766) had earlier developed theories which became the basis for documentary hypothesis in the Old Testament. Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) took this further, and gained dubious fame by becoming the leading attacker of the Old Testament. Various secret writers were assigned to different parts of the Mosaic books; and, just as was being done to the New Testament by other critics, many of the books were said to have been written by men other than the traditional ones. For example, Daniel was said to have been written centuries later, and "Daniel" himself was just a fictional character.

This higher critical approach did much to destroy the historically held views concerning the au-

This two-tract set will be Chapter One in a book on this subject, which we are now working on. We will announce its size and price in the next (*Checkpoints*) mailing. The remainder of the book will provide in-depth coverage of certain aspects of this charge and their refutation. We want to work closely with you in helping to protect fellow believers from these attacks on the precious Spirit of Prophecy writings. —vf

thorship of the Biblical books.

The secret writer theorists among us declare that we must throw out the paragraphs and books which were written by others, in order to find the original Ellen White.

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) used this same method on the Bible. Bultmann developed a radical criticism of the text, and called it "form criticism." He said that we must try to figure out the words and paragraphs which were not in the original (sound familiar?), so we could find the remnants of the original New Testament. Bultmann called this "*demythologizing*" them; that is, strip them of the myth with which the early church had cloaked the gospel writings. Bultmann said the problem was that other men had "embellished" (changed and added to) the original records. So, in his human wisdom, he searched for the additions of the so-called "redactors" and tossed them out.

It was from such men that modern preachers got the idea of telling their congregations to cut out the pages of the Bible. Irresponsible men among us are telling us that we, today, must cut out the pages of the Spirit of Prophecy. I do not intend to do it. What are you going to do?

The secret writers' theory of Baur, Strauss, and Wellhausen did to the Bible what Herman Hoehn and Vern Bates' secret writers' theory is doing to the Spirit of Prophecy today. German higher criticism became the basic study in every liberal theological seminary in Europe and America. If you go to one of them today, that is what you will be taught.

This evening for personal worship, I read once again a beautiful passage in the Spirit of Prophecy. They are all so wonderful. Yet, tonight as I read, I found myself near tears. I thought of all the fine Advent believers who no longer will read such words. Thieves have come and stolen the precious writings away from them.