

“The Gift (8): Ellen White— But What about the Critics?”

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□ Divine Inspiration

- Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10—one of the ways divine inspiration works:
 - #1—In an effort to _____ the people (divine instruction)
 - #2—The inspired one gathers together his _____ (human research/reading)
 - #3—And grapples to find acceptable _____ (human vocabulary)
 - #4—To communicate what will be “words of _____” (authoritative divine revelation).
 - Solomon’s multiple sources for Proverbs: his own words (chs 1-22, 25-29); the words of “the wise” (with striking parallels with the _____ *Wisdom of Amenemope*) (22:17-24:22); the words of unnamed wisemen (24:23-34); the words of Agur (ch 30); and the words of King Lemuel (ch 31).
- II Timothy 3:16—“_____ Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”
- Apparently divine inspiration allows for the inspired writer/prophet to consult and quote _____ sources for his divine revelation, without giving _____ to his sources.
- John and Revelation:
 - Did you know that John the Revelator actually borrowed multiple lines from a non-inspired source (book of Enoch) and _____ them as if they were his own words?
 - What is more he borrowed the non-inspired author’s words for some of his “_____” declarations.
 - I Enoch 40:1—“After that I saw . . . a multitude beyond number and reckoning, who stood before the Lord of the Spirits.”
Revelation 7:9—“After these things I looked and behold, a great multitude which no one could number . . . standing before the throne.”
 - I Enoch 86:1—“And I saw and behold a star fell from heaven . . .”
Revelation 9:1—“And I saw a star fallen from heaven . . .”
 - One list shows _____ lines from the book of Enoch that John borrowed in order to write Revelation—all without credit.

□ Ellen White

- Jud Lake: “The _____ model of inspiration recognizes numerous modes through which the Spirit of God worked with human beings to produce Scripture. One of these modes relevant to the issue of literary borrowing is that of historical research. In this mode, the biblical author produced inspired writings independent of dreams and visions. He received information through research—reading, studying, compiling, and editing material from various documents (literary borrowing) generated by both inspired and uninspired authors. Nevertheless, God was providentially present, and He was supervising the entire process.” (*Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics* 120)
- Tim Poirier: “The rebuttal from Ellen White’s opponents to this comparison is that the *quantity* of copying is higher in her writings than among the Bible writers. But the amount of borrowing is irrelevant to the question of whether inspired writers may legitimately use the language of other authors—including extra-Biblical sources. Once it is recognized that inspiration is not negated by the use of pre-existing human sources, who is to say what percentage of an inspired messenger’s language must be free from such dependency?” (“Ellen G. White and Sources: The Plagiarism Debate—120 Years Later”, unpublished paper, p 17)
- Fred Veltman: “A fair assessment of the evidence should not deny or underplay the degree of her dependence, but neither should it overlook or depreciate her independence. . . . The sources were her slaves, never her master.” (http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/LOCRP/LOCRP-18_Sum&Con/index.djvu)
- Ellen White: “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. . . . In some cases where a historian has so grouped

- together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted; but in some instances no specific credit has been given, since the quotations are not given for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject. In narrating the experience and views of those carrying forward the work of reform in our own time, similar use has been made of their published works.” (*The Great Controversy* xi, xii)
- Denis Fortin, Jerry Moon: “. . . the practice of borrowing from other authors without giving explicit or detailed credit was widespread among writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. . . . Although by today’s literary standards this practice is unacceptable, it forms the historical context of Ellen White’s own practice. Such a practice was followed, for example, by John Wesley in writing his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*. ‘It was a doubt with me for some time,’ he wrote in the preface, ‘whether I should not subjoin to every note I received from them the name of the author from whom it was taken . . . But upon further consideration, I resolved to name none, that nothing might divert the mind of the reader from keeping close to the point of view, and receiving what was spoken only for its own intrinsic value.’” (unpub. encyclopedia ch., p 2)
 - Roman Catholic attorney Vincent Ramik: “Based upon our review of the facts and legal precedents . . . Ellen White was not a plagiarist and her works did not constitute copyright infringement/piracy.” “It is impossible to imagine that the intention of Ellen G. White, as reflected in her writings and the unquestionably prodigious effort involved therein, was anything other than a sincerely motivated and unselfish effort to place the understanding of Biblical truths in a coherent form for all to see and comprehend.” “Considering all factors necessary in reaching a just conclusion on this issue, it is submitted that the writings of Ellen G. White were conclusively unplagiaristic.” (quoted in *Adventist Review* September 17, 1981)
 - Ellen White: “He [Christ] taught that the word of God was to be understood by all. He pointed to the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority, and we should do the same. The Bible is to be presented as the word of the infinite God, as the _____ of all controversy and the _____ of all faith.” (*Christ’s Object Lessons* 39, 40)
 - Re: David and Bathsheba, Nathan was a non-canonical prophet—but he had plenty of spiritual _____!
 - Merlin Burt: “The _____ of inspiration in her writings is the same as that of Bible prophets, but the _____ is different. She expressed that her messages were for the purpose of leading people to the Bible . . . to testify to the centrality and primacy of the Bible. . . . She wrote: ‘I have a work of great responsibility to do—to impart by pen and voice the instruction given me, not alone to Seventh-day Adventists, but to the world. I have published many books, large and small, and some of these have been translated into several languages. This is my work—to open the Scripture to others as God has opened them to me’ [8T 236].” (“Recognizing the Authority of Ellen White’s Prophetic Message”—paper read July 2010)
 - For further rebuttal of the critics’ charges:
 - www.ellenwhiteanswers.org
 - www.whiteestate.org

*“By their fruits
you shall know them”*

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Understanding of Ellen White’s Authority”

AFFIRMATIONS

1. We believe that Scripture is the divinely revealed word of God and is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
2. We believe that the canon of Scripture is composed only of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.
3. We believe that Scripture is the foundation of faith and the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice.
4. We believe that Scripture is the Word of God in human language.
5. We believe that Scripture teaches that the gift of prophecy will be manifest in the Christian church after New Testament times.
6. We believe that the ministry and writings of Ellen White were a manifestation of the gift of prophecy.
7. We believe that Ellen White was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that her writings, the product of that inspiration, are applicable and authoritative, especially to Seventh-day Adventists.
8. We believe that the purposes of the Ellen White writings include guidance in understanding the teaching of Scripture and application of these teachings, with prophetic urgency, to the spiritual and moral life.
9. We believe that the acceptance of the prophetic gift of Ellen White is important to the nurture and unity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
10. We believe that Ellen White's use of literary sources and assistants finds parallels in some of the writings of the Bible.

DENIALS

1. We do not believe that the quality or degree of inspiration in the writings of Ellen White is different from that of Scripture.
2. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are an addition to the canon of Sacred Scripture.
3. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White function as the foundation and final authority of Christian faith as does Scripture.
4. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White may be used as the basis of doctrine.
5. We do not believe that the study of the writings of Ellen White may be used to replace the study of Scripture.
6. We do not believe that Scripture can be understood only through the writings of Ellen White.
7. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White exhaust the meaning of Scripture.
8. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are essential for the proclamation of the truths of Scripture to society at large.
9. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are the product of mere Christian piety.
10. We do not believe that Ellen White's use of literary sources and assistants negates the inspiration of her writings.

We conclude, therefore, that a correct understanding of the inspiration and authority of the writings of Ellen White will avoid two extremes: (1) regarding these writings as functioning on a canonical level identical with Scripture, or (2) considering them as ordinary Christian literature.

<http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/scripsda.html>

teach, sources, words, truth, Egyptian, All, non-inspired, credit, quoted, I saw, 22, whole person, end, foundation, authority, quality, purpose