

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

ELLEN G. WHITE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD HER WORK



Ellen G. White's Attitude Toward Her Work

Ellen G. White

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Overview

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About the Author

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

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[See [Testimonies for the Church 5:654-691](#).]

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1. Experience of Ellen White in Receiving the Visions

First Vision: “While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me.”—[Early Writings](#), 14.

“Five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. At this time I had a view of the experience of the Advent believers, the coming of Christ, and the reward to be given to the faithful.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:654, 655](#).

“When my breath came again to my body, I could not hear anything. Everything was dark.... I asked where I was.

“‘You are right here in my house,’ said [Mrs. Haines] the owner of the house.

“‘What, here? I here? Do you not know about it?’ Then it all came back to me. Is this to be my home? Have I come here again? Oh, the weight and the burden which came upon my soul.”—E. G. White Ms. 16, 1894. (In *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 6.)

2. Call Established in Own Mind—1845

Dared not doubt: “In the confusion I was sometimes tempted to doubt my own experience. While at family prayers one morning, the power of God began to rest upon me, and the thought rushed into my mind that it was mesmerism, and I resisted it. Immediately I was struck dumb.... After that I dared not doubt, or for a moment resist the power of God, however others might think of me.”—[Early Writings, 22, 23](#).

3. Understanding of Binding Claims of Testimonies

Broadside statement—1849: “I saw the state of some who stood on present truth, but disregarded the visions,—the way God had chosen to teach in some cases, those who erred from Bible truth. I saw that in striking against the visions they did not strike against the worm—the feeble instrument that God spake through—but against the Holy Ghost. I saw it was a small thing to speak against the instrument, but it was dangerous to slight the words of God. I saw if they were in error and God chose to show them their errors through visions, and they disregarded the teachings of God through visions, they would be left to take their own way, and run in the way of error, and think they were right, until they would find it out too late.”—Broadside: [To Those who are receiving the seal of the living God, January 31, 1849](#). In [Selected Messages 1:40](#).

[2] *Held responsible for neglect to read—1907:* “I am instructed to say to our churches, Study the Testimonies. They are written for our admonition and encouragement upon whom the ends of the world are come. If God’s people will not study these messages that are sent to them from time to time, they are guilty of rejecting light. Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, God is sending instruction to His people. Heed the instruction; follow the light. The Lord has a controversy with His people because in the past they have not heeded His instruction and followed His guidance.”—[Letter 292, 1907](#).

4. Why Given in Our Day

In first book—1851: “I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the “*last days*”; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.”—*Experience and Views*, p. 64 ([Early Writings](#), 78).

5. E. G. White Work Not Unlike Bible Prophets

In these days: “In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the Testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:661](#).

6. Relationship of E. G. White Writings to Bible

The lesser light: “Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.”—[The Review and Herald, January 20, 1903](#) ([Colporteur Ministry, 125](#)).

Tested by the Bible: “The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the Word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.... Isaiah declares, ‘To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ [Isaiah 8:20](#).”—*Great Controversy*, “Introduction,” p. vii.

7. Not for the Purpose of Giving New Light

“Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the *Testimonies* is an addition to the Word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His Word, to give them a clearer understanding of it. The Word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind, and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the Word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the Word that they have neglected to follow. The Word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:663, 664](#).

- [3] “The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man’s duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God’s word yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the *Testimonies* simplified the great truths already given, and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.... The *Testimonies* are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:665](#).

8. To Correct Error and Specify what is Truth

“The Lord has given me much light that I want the people to have; for there is instruction that the Lord has given me for His people. It is light that they should have, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. This is now to come before the people, because it has been given to correct specious errors and to specify what is truth. The Lord has revealed many things pointing out the truth, thus saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.”—Mrs. E. G. White, [Letter 117, 1910](#) (*Messenger, to the Remnant*, p. 82).

9. Was Ellen G. White a Prophet—A Messenger with a Message?

“Some have stumbled over the fact that I said I did not claim to be a prophet; ¹ and they have asked, Why is this?

“I have had no claims to make, only that *I am instructed that I am the Lord’s messenger*; that He called me in my youth to be His messenger, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus.

“Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord’s messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Saviour declared me to be His messenger....

“Why have I not claimed to be a prophet?—Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes much more than the word ‘prophet’ signifies.”—[The Review and Herald, July 26, 1906](#). In [Selected Messages 1:31, 32](#).

W. C. White’s statement regarding E. G. White’s work: “As regards Mother’s being a prophetess: There is no doubt in her mind or the mind of any of her family or helpers, but that she is a prophet of the Lord. But Mother takes the same position regarding this matter as did John the Baptist. Please read the first chapter of the Gospel of John, [verses 19-23](#), and you will observe that John, in his modesty, said he was not Elias nor that prophet. He said: ‘I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.’ But we learn from the words of Christ that John was the Elias, and a prophet. Mother says of her work: ‘I do not care to be called a prophet. I am a messenger with a message.’ But she has never said that she was not a prophet.”—W. C. White letter to Mr. J. J. Gorrell, May 13, 1904.

¹Note: Reference is here made to a discourse given at Battle Creek, Oct. 2, 1904, in which she said, “I do not claim to be a prophetess.”

10. The Work of a Prophet and More

“During the discourse, I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Some were surprised at this statement, and as much is being said in regard to it, I will make an explanation. Others have called me a prophetess, but I have never assumed that title. I have not felt that it was my duty thus to designate myself. Those who boldly assume that they are prophets in this our day are often a reproach to the cause of Christ. [4]

“My work includes much more than this name signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people.”—[Letter 55, 1905](#). In [Selected Messages 1:35-36](#).

“I am now instructed that I am not to be hindered in my work by those who engage in suppositions regarding its nature, whose minds are struggling with so many intricate problems connected with the supposed work of a prophet. My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces much more than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend.”—[Letter 244, 1906](#) (Addressed to elders of the Battle Creek Church), in [Selected Messages 1:36](#).

11. Experiences of Ellen White While in Vision

“When the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into the presence of Jesus and angels, and am entirely lost to earthly things. I can see no farther than the angel directs me. My attention is often directed to scenes transpiring upon earth.

“At times I am carried far ahead into the future and shown what is to take place. Then again I am shown things as they have occurred in the past.”—[Spiritual Gifts 2:292](#) (1860)

An Understanding Presented to the Mind: “Friday, March 20, 1896, I arose early, about half past three o’clock in the morning. While writing upon the fifteenth chapter of John, suddenly a wonderful peace came upon me. The whole room seemed to be filled with the atmosphere of heaven. A holy, sacred presence seemed to be in my room. I laid down my pen and was in a waiting attitude to see what the Spirit would say unto me. I saw no person. I heard no audible voice, but a heavenly watcher seemed close beside me. I felt that I was in the presence of Jesus. The sweet peace and light which seemed to be in my room it is impossible for me to explain or describe. A sacred, holy atmosphere surrounded me, and there was presented to my mind and understanding matters of intense interest and importance. A line of action was laid out before me as if the unseen presence was speaking with me. The matter I had been writing upon seemed to be lost to my mind and another matter distinctly opened before me. A great awe seemed to be upon me as matters were imprinted upon my mind.”—[Manuscript 12c, 1896](#).

Representations While Writing: “Not only when I am standing before large congregations is special help bestowed upon me; but when I am using my pen, wonderful representations are given me of past, present, and future.”—[Letter 86, 1906](#).

12. Mind Illuminated by the Visions

“Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, *the scenes* of the long-continued conflict between good and evil *have been opened to the writer of these pages*. From time to time *I have been permitted to behold* the working, in different ages, of the great controversy, etc.”—*Great Controversy*, “Introduction,” p. x. (Italics supplied)

“While at Loma Linda, California, April 16, 1906, *there passed before me a most wonderful representation*. During a vision of the night, I stood on an eminence, from which *I could see* houses shaken like a reed in the wind.... The air was filled with the shrieks of the injured and the terrified.... The awfulness of the *scenes that passed before me* I cannot find words to describe.... That which impressed itself most vividly upon my mind was the instruction given in connection with it. The angel that stood by my side declared, etc.”—[Testimonies for the Church 9:92, 93](#). (Italics supplied) [5]

“The Lord has seen fit to give me a view of the needs and errors of His people.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:661](#).

Fit Words Brought to Her Mind: “I have all faith in God.... He works at my right hand and at my left. While I am writing out important matter, He is beside me, helping me. He lays out my work before me, and when I am puzzled for a fit word with which to express my thoughts, He brings it clearly and distinctly to my mind. I feel that every time I ask, even while I am still speaking, He responds, ‘Here am I.’”—[Letter 127, 1902](#).

Holy Ghost the Author: “The Holy Ghost is the author of the Scriptures and of the Spirit of Prophecy. These are not to be twisted and turned to mean what man may want them to mean, to carry out man’s ideas and sentiments, to carry forward man’s schemes at all hazards. ‘Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, and through covetousness shall with feigned words make merchandise of you.’ We must stand as vigilant soldiers, guarding against the entrance

of one wrong principle.”—[Letter 92, 1900](#) (written to Dr. J. H. Kellogg).

13. Bearing Testimony—Instruction to Ellen White

“Make known to others what I have revealed to you.”—[Early Writings](#), 20.

“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.*”—*Great Controversy*, “Introduction,” p. xi (Italics supplied)

“From the beginning of my work,” “I have been called upon to bear a plain, pointed testimony, to reprove wrongs, and to spare not.”—[Testimonies for the Church](#) 5:678.

14. Bearing Testimony—Aided by the Spirit of God

“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 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.”—[Spiritual Gifts 2:292-3](#). (1860)

15. Bearing Testimony—“I Stand Alone, Severely Alone”

“I have a statement to make. When the Lord presents before me any matter and instruction and I have a message to bear concerning the said matter, then I shall to the best of my God-given ability, make known the matter, presenting the mind and will of God just as clearly as my human capabilities, guided and controlled by the Holy Spirit, shall bring all the matter before me to present to others. In regard to the serious matters given me, I have not given any one—man or woman—any right to have the least control over my work the Lord has given me to do. [6]

“Since twenty-one years ago, when I was deprived of my husband by death, I have not had the slightest idea of ever marrying again. Why? Not because God forbade it. No. But to stand alone was the best for me, that no one should suffer with me in carrying forward my work entrusted to me of God. And no one should have a right to influence me in any way in reference to my responsibility and my work in bearing my testimony of encouragement and reproof.

“My husband never stood in my way to do this, although I had help and encouragement from him and oft his pity. His sympathy and prayers and tears I have missed so much, so very much. No one can understand this as myself. But my work has to be done. No human power should give the least supposition that I would be influenced in the work God has given me to do in bearing my testimony to those for whom He has given me reproof or encouragement.

“I have been alone in this matter, severely alone with all the difficulties and all the trials connected with the work. God alone could help me. The last work that is to be done by me in this world will soon be finished. I must express myself plainly, in a manner, if possible not to be misunderstood.

“I have not one person in the world who shall put any message in my mind, or lay one duty upon me. I am now to say to you,_____,

When the Lord gives me a burden for you or for anyone, you shall have it in the way and manner the Lord gives it to me.”—[Manuscript 227, 1902](#).

Hard for E. G. White: “It has been hard for me to give the message that God has given me for those I love, and yet I have not dared to withhold it.... I would not do a work that is so uncongenial to me if I thought God would excuse me from it.”—[Letter 40, 1895](#) (In *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 13)

16. The Visions—Not Controlled by Man

[7]

“It is utterly false that I have ever intimated I could have a vision when I pleased. There is not a shade of truth in this. I have never said I could throw myself into visions when I pleased, for this is simply impossible.

“I have felt for years that if I could have my choice and please God as well I would rather die than have a vision, for every vision places me under great responsibility to bear testimonies of reproof and of warning, which has ever been against my feelings, causing me affliction of soul that is inexpressible. Never have I coveted my position, and yet I dare not resist the Spirit of God and seek an easier position.

“The spirit of God has come upon me at different times, in different places, and under various circumstances. My husband has no control of these manifestations of the Spirit of God. Many times he has been far away when I have had visions.”—[Letter 2, 1874](#) (To J. N. Loughborough)

17. The Question of Influence ²

Independent of books or opinions: “My views were written independent of books or the opinions of others.”—[Manuscript 27, 1867](#) (Concerning Visions on Health) (*In Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 16)

Light not from current books: “As I introduced the subject of health to friends, and spoke against drugs and flesh meats, and in favor of water, pure air, and proper diet, the reply was often made, ‘You speak very nearly the opinions taught in the LAWS OF LIFE and other publications, by Doctors Trall, Jackson, and others. Have you read that paper and those works?’ My reply was that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views, lest it should be said that I had received my light upon the subject of health from physicians and not from the Lord.”—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#) (*In Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 16)

Relation of EGW to able writers: “After I had written my six articles for *How To Live*, I then searched the various works on hygiene, and was surprised to find them so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed to me. And to show this harmony, and to set before my brethren and sisters the subject as brought out by able writers, I determined to publish *How To Live*, in which I largely extracted from the works referred to”—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#) (*In The Messenger*, 16).

Witness in 1864 of Publishing House Trustees: “We have thought proper to add to the foregoing the following Testimonies from men of high standing and authority in the medical world, corroborative of the views presented in the preceding pages. And in justice to the Writer of those pages, we would say that she had read nothing from the authors here quoted, and had read no other works on this subject, previous to putting into our hands what she has written. She is not, therefore, a copyist, although she has stated important truths

²Note: See A. L. White in *The Ellen G. White Writings*, pp. 79-105

to which men who are entitled to our highest confidence, have borne testimony.”—Trustees, in *Appeal to Mothers*, p. 34.

Did not read certain letters: “You may blame me for not reading your package of writings. I did not read them neither did I read the letters that Dr. Kellogg sent. I had a message of stern rebuke for the publishing house, and I knew that if I read the communications sent to me, later on, when the testimony came out, you and Dr. Kellogg would be tempted to say, ‘I gave her that inspiration.’”—[Letter 301, 1905](#).

Who has told Sister White?—“Those who have disregarded the messages of warning have lost their bearings. Some, in their self-confidence, have dared to turn from that which they knew to be truth, with the words, ‘Who has told Sister White?’ These words show the measure of their faith and confidence in the work that the Lord has given me to do. They have before them the result of the work that the Lord has laid upon me, and if this does not convince them, no arguments, no future revelations, would affect them. The result will be that God will speak again in judgment as He has spoken heretofore.”—[The Review and Herald, May 19, 1903](#), p. 8.

Who told her these things?—“Some are ready to inquire: Who told Sister White these things? They have even put the question to me: Did anyone tell you these things? I could answer them: Yes; yes, the angel of God has spoken to me. But what they mean is: Have the brethren and sisters been exposing their faults? For the future, I shall not belittle the testimonies that God has given me, to make explanations to try to satisfy such narrow minds, but shall treat all such questions as an insult to the Spirit of God. God has seen fit to thrust me into positions in which He has not placed any other one in our ranks. He has laid upon me burdens of reproof that He has not given to any other one.”—[Testimonies for the Church 3:314-315](#) (1874)

[8]

Someone has told Sister White: “Even now unbelief is expressed by the words, ‘Who has written these things to Sister White?’ But I know of no one who knows them as they are, and no one who could write that which he does not suppose has an existence. Some one has told me,—He who does not falsify, misjudge, or exaggerate any case.”—[Special Instruction Relating to the Review and Herald Office, and the Work in Battle Creek, 16](#) (1896)

One of Satan's hooks: "You have talked over matters as you viewed them, that the communications from Sister White are not all from the Lord, but a portion is her own mind, her own judgment, which is no better than anybody else's judgment and ideas. This is one of Satan's hooks to hang your doubts upon to deceive your soul and the souls of others who will dare to draw the line in this matter and say, this portion which pleases me is from God, but that portion which points out and condemns my course of conduct is from Sister White alone, and bears not the holy signet."—[Letter 16, 1888](#).

An attempt to guide Mrs. White: "Brother_____suggests that it would please the people if I speak less about duty and more in regard to the love of Jesus. But I wish to speak as the Spirit of the Lord shall impress me. The Lord knows best what this people needs. I spoke in the forenoon [Sabbath, October 17, 1885] from [Isaiah 58](#). I did not round the corners at all.... My work is to elevate the standard of piety and true Christian life, and urge the people to put away their sins and be sanctified through the truth"—[Manuscript 26, 1885](#).

18. The Question of Ellen G. White's Opinion

"This is not my opinion": "After I wrote you the long letter which has been belittled by Eld. X as merely an expression of my own opinion, while at the southern California camp meeting, the Lord partially removed the restriction, and I write what I do. I dare not say more now, lest I go beyond what the Spirit of the Lord has permitted me.

"When Prof. Z 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 Eld. X, 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. In no case have I given my own judgment or opinion. I have enough to write of what has been shown me, without falling back on my own opinions. You are doing as the children of Israel did again and again. Instead of repenting before God, you reject His words, and attribute all the warnings and reproof to the messenger whom the Lord sends."—[Testimony for the Battle Creek Church, 50, 58.](#)

[9]

A point met repeatedly: "Many times in my experience I have been called upon to meet the attitude of a certain class, who acknowledged that the testimonies were from God, but took the position that this matter and that matter were Sister White's opinion and judgment. This suits those who do not love reproof and correction, and who,

if their ideas are crossed, have occasion to explain the difference between the human and the divine.

“If the preconceived opinions or particular ideas of some are crossed in being reproved by testimonies, they have a burden at once to make plain their position to discriminate between the testimonies, defining what is Sister White’s human judgment, and what is the word of the Lord. Everything that sustains their cherished ideas is divine, and the testimonies to correct their errors are human—Sister White’s opinions. They make of none effect the counsel of God by their tradition.”—[Manuscript 16, 1889](#).

The testimonies not her opinions: “In the testimonies sent to____ - ____I have given you the light God has given to me. In no case have I given my own judgment or opinion. I have enough to write of what has been shown me, without falling back on my own opinions.”—[Testimony for the Battle Creek Church, 58](#).

Not her mind: “Permit me to express my mind, and yet not my mind, but the word of the Lord.”—[Counsels to Writers and Editors, 112](#).

Attributing God’s messages to human sources: “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 and Gospel Workers, 466](#).

19. When There was no “Thus Saith the Lord”

“I have not been given the message, Send for Bro. John Wessels to come to Australia. No; therefore I do not say, I know that this is the place for you. But it is my privilege to express my wishes, even though I say, I speak not by commandment. But I do not want you to come because of any persuasion of mine. I want you to seek the Lord most earnestly, and then follow where He shall lead you. I want you to come when God says, Come, not one moment before. Nevertheless, it is my privilege to present the wants of the work of God in Australia. Australia is not my country only as it is the Lord’s province. The country is God’s; the people are His. A work is to be done here, and if you are not the one to do it, I shall feel perfectly resigned to hear that you have gone to some other locality.”—[Letter 129, 1897](#). (From a letter to John Wessels, concerning the need for a sanitarium in Australia and the possibility of his coming to Australia to launch such an enterprise.)

20. Sister White's Judgment

[10] *A judgment under God's training:* "He and you have evidenced your opinion of your own judgment—that it was more reliable than Sister White's. Did you consider that Sister White has been dealing with just such cases during her life of service for the Master, that cases similar to your own and many varieties of cases have passed before her that should make her know what is right and what is wrong in these things? Is a judgment that has been under the training of God for more than fifty years of no preference to those who have not had this discipline and education? Please consider these things."—[Letter 115, 1895](#).

Care in expressing her judgment: "I find myself frequently placed where I dare give neither assent nor dissent to propositions that are submitted to me; for there is danger that any words I may speak shall be reported as something that the Lord has given me. It is not always safe for me to express my own judgment; for sometimes when some one wishes to carry out his own purpose, he will regard any favorable word I may speak, as special light from the Lord. I shall be cautious in all my movements."—[Letter 162, 1907](#).

21. The Integrity of Her Message

“I speak that which I have seen, and which I know to be true.”—[Letter 4, 1896](#).

“In all your communications, speak as one to whom the Lord has spoken. He is your authority.”—[Letter 186, 1902](#).

“Through His Holy Spirit the voice of God has come to us continually in warning and instruction, to confirm the faith of the believers in the Spirit of prophecy. Repeatedly the word has come, Write the things that I have given you to confirm the faith of My people in the position they have taken. Time and trial have not made void the instruction given.... The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days.”—[The Review and Herald, July 18, 1907](#). (In [Selected Messages 1:41](#))

“God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work ...bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The *Testimonies* are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil.”—[Testimonies for the Church 4:230](#).

22. E. G. White Guarded Against a Misuse

Steps she took: “I must select the most important matters for the Testimony (vol. 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 ³, and if I see a sentence which I fear would give some one excuse to injure some one else, I feel at perfect liberty to keep back the sentence, even though it is all perfectly true.”—[Letter 32, 1901](#).

[11] *Quoting half a sentence:* “Why will not men see and live the truth? Many study the Scriptures for the purpose of proving their own ideas to be correct. They change the meaning of God’s word to suit their own opinions. And thus they do also with the testimonies that He sends. They quote half a sentence, leaving out the other half, which, if quoted, would show their reasoning to be false. God has a controversy with those who wrest the Scriptures, making them conform to their preconceived ideas.”—[Manuscript 22, 1890](#).

Private interviews sometimes twisted: “It seems impossible for me to be understood by those who have had the light but have not walked in it. What I might say in private conversations would be so repeated as to make it mean exactly opposite to what it would have meant had the hearers been sanctified in mind and spirit. I am afraid to speak even to my friends; for afterwards I hear, Sister White said this, or, Sister White said that. My words are so wrested and misin-

³Note: W. C. White on the point of “general principles “: “As you are well aware mother seldom answers such questions directly; but she endeavors to lay down principles and bring forward facts which have been presented to her that will aid us in giving intelligent study to the subject, and in arriving at a correct conclusion.”—W. C. White letter to A. O. Tait, Nov. 22, 1895 (In WCW Letter Book No. 8, 1895, p. 436).

terpreted that I am coming to the conclusion that the Lord desires me to keep out of large assemblies and refuse private interviews. What I say is reported in such a perverted light that it is new and strange to me. It is mixed with words spoken by men to sustain their own theories.”—[Letter 139, 1900](#).

23. The Problem of Confidentiality

“I bore my testimony, and related things which had been shown me in the past history of some present, warning them of their dangers and reproving their wrong course of action. I stated that I had been placed in most disagreeable positions. When families and individuals were brought before me in vision, it was frequently the case that what was shown me in relation to them was of a private nature, reproving secret sins. I have labored with some for months in regard to wrongs of which others knew nothing. As my brethren see these persons sad, and hear them express doubts in regard to their acceptance with God, also feelings of despondency, they have cast censure upon me, as though I was to blame for their being in trial.

“Those who thus censured me were entirely ignorant of what they were talking about. I protested against persons’ sitting as inquisitors upon my course of action. It has been the disagreeable work assigned me to reprove private sins. Were I, in order to prevent suspicions and jealousy, to give a full explanation of my course, and make public that which should be kept private, I should sin against God and wrong the individuals. I have to keep private reproofs of private wrongs to myself, locked in my own breast. Let others judge as they may, I will never betray the confidence reposed in me by the erring and repentant, or reveal to others that which should only be brought before the ones that are guilty.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White](#), 177.

24. Visions Paul Could Not Tell Molded His Messages

“The great apostle had many visions. The Lord showed him many things that it is not lawful for a man to utter. Why could he not tell the believers what he had seen? Because they would have made a misapplication of the great truths presented. They would not have been able to comprehend these truths. And yet all that was shown to Paul moulded the messages that God gave him to bear to the churches.”—[Letter 161, 1903](#).

25. E. G. White Understanding of Her Writings

The books: “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](#).

The articles: “I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:65](#).

The letters (testimonies): “Weak and trembling, I arose at three o’clock in the morning to write to you. God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:67](#).

The interviews: “He [Elder G. A. Irwin] has with him a little notebook in which he has noted down perplexing questions which he brings before me, and if I have any light upon these points, I write it out for the benefit of our people, not only in America but in this country.”—[Letter 96, 1899](#) (In [The Messenger, 117](#))

When there was no light: “I have no light on the subject (as to just who would constitute the 144,000).... Please tell my brethren that I have nothing presented before me regarding the circumstances concerning which they write, and I can set before them only that which has been presented to me.”—Quoted in a letter by C. C. Crisler to E. E. Andross, Dec. 8, 1914.

“I am not at liberty to write to our brethren concerning your future work. I have received no instruction regarding the place where you should locate.... If the Lord gives me definite instruction concerning you, I will give it you; but I cannot take upon myself

responsibilities that the Lord does not give me to bear.”—[Letter 96, 1909](#).

I could speak: “This morning I attended a meeting where a select few were called together to consider some questions that were presented to them by a letter soliciting consideration and advice on these subjects. Of some of these subjects I could speak, because at sundry times and in divers places many things have been presented to me.... As my brethren read the selections from letters, I knew what to say to them; for this matter has been presented to me again and again.... I have not felt at liberty to write out the matter until now.... The light that the Lord has given me at different times, etc.”—[The Southern Work, 97, 98](#).

26. The Visions and Their Relationship to Mrs. White's Testimony

(a) Testimony—Direct account of single vision: “Aug. 24, 1850, I saw....”—[Early Writings, 59](#).

(b) Testimony—Composite account of many visions. The Conflict Series: “From time to time I have been permitted to behold the working, in different ages, of the great controversy ...”—*Great Controversy*, “Introduction,” p. X.

[13] (c) Testimony—Counsel based on a specific vision: “In the night of march 2, 1907, many things were revealed to me regarding the value of our publications.”—[Testimonies for the Church 9:65](#).

(d) Testimony—Counsel based on a specific vision: “God has given me a testimony of reproof for parents who treat their children as you do your little one.”—[Letter 1, 1877](#).

“This matter has been brought before my mind, in other cases, where individuals have claimed to have messages for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of a similar character, and the word has been given me, ‘Believe them not.’”—[Letter 16, 1893](#) ([Selected Messages 2:63, 64](#)).

27. Not Always a Special Vision

Paul shown in advance dangers that would arise: “Paul was an inspired apostle, yet the Lord did not reveal to him at all times just the condition of His people. Those who were interested in the prosperity of the church, and saw evils creeping in, presented the matter before him, and from the light which he had previously received he was prepared to judge of the true character of these developments. Because the Lord had not given him a new revelation for that special time, those who were really seeking light did not cast his message aside as only a common letter. No, indeed. The Lord had shown him the difficulties and dangers which would arise in the churches, that when they should develop he might know just how to treat them.

“He was set for the defense of the church. He was to watch for souls as one that must render account to God, and should he not take notice of the reports concerning their state of anarchy and division? Most assuredly; and the reproof he sent them was written just as much under the inspiration of the Spirit of God as were any of his epistles.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:65, 66](#).

Similar cases: “I write this for I dare not withhold it. You are far from doing the will of God, far from Jesus, far from heaven. It is no marvel to me that God has not blessed your labors. You may say God has not given Sr. White a vision in my case, why, then, does she write as she does? I have seen the cases of others who, like you, are neglecting their duties. I have seen many things in your case in your past experience. And when I enter a family and see a course pursued that God has reproofed and condemned, I am in grief and distress, whether the special sins have been shown me or the sins of another who has neglected similar duties. I know whereof I speak. I feel deeply over the matter. I say, then, for Christ’s sake make haste to come on the right ground, and harness up for the battle.”—[Letter 52, 1886](#).

28. Testimony Expressed in Her Own Words

“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 off quotation.”—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#) (In [Selected Messages 1:37](#))

[14] *W. C. White’s statement endorsed by Mrs. White:* “Mother has never laid claim to verbal inspiration, and I do not find that my father, or Elder Bates, Andrews, Smith, or Waggoner put forth this claim. If there were verbal inspiration in writing her manuscripts, why should there be on her part the work of addition or adaptation? It is a fact that Mother often takes one of her manuscripts, and goes over it thoughtfully, making additions that develop the thought still further.”—W. C. White before General Conference Council, Oct. 30, 1911.

General Conference Action—1883: “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.”—General Conference Proceedings, [The Review and Herald, November 27, 1883](#). [*Witness*, p. 54]

29. The Question of Infallibility

The Bible: “Some look to us gravely and say, ‘Don’t you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?’ This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God.... All the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth.”—[Manuscript 16, 1888](#) (In [Selected Messages 1:16](#)).

God and heaven alone infallible: “We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.”—[The Review and Herald, July 26, 1892](#) (In [Selected Messages 1:37](#)).

“In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible. His word is true, and in Him is no variableness, or shadow of turning.”—[Selected Messages 1:37](#).

A union of the divine and the human: “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. The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God’ ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)); yet they are expressed in the words of men. 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.

“The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine and not of 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.](#)”—[The Great Controversy, v, vi](#), “Introduction,”.

30. Are There E. G. White Writings Which Are Not Inspired?

(No claim is made by Ellen White for inspiration of words used in ordinary everyday conversation or in the purely biographical accounts. This is illustrated by *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, published in 1860, as contrasted with *Spiritual Gifts* vol. 1, published in 1859.)

(a) *Authority of vol. 1: The Great Controversy Vision*. Opening words: “The Lord has shown me that ...” “And I saw that ...”—[Spiritual Gifts 1:17](#). “I then looked, and saw ...” “Again I looked and saw ...”—[Spiritual Gifts 1:218](#). [15]

(b) *Volume 2, the biographical account*: “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 to *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2.

(c) *Appendix statement*: “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.”—Appendix in first 400 copies.

“*The sacred and the common*”: “The information given concerning the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium was given, not as a revelation from the Lord, but simply as a human opinion. There has never been revealed to me the exact number of rooms in any of our sanitariums; and the knowledge I have obtained of such things I have gained by inquiring of those who were supposed to know. In my words, when speaking upon these common subjects, there is nothing to lead minds to believe that I receive my knowledge in a vision from the Lord and am stating it as such....

“When the Holy Spirit reveals anything regarding the institutions connected with the Lord’s work, or concerning the work of God upon human hearts and minds, as He has revealed these things through me in the past, the message given is to be regarded as light given of God for those who need it. But for one to mix the sacred with the common is a great mistake. In a tendency to do this we may see the working of the enemy to destroy souls....

“But there are times when common things must be stated, common thoughts must occupy the mind, common letters must be written and information given that has passed from one to another of the workers. Such words, such information, are not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God. Questions are asked at times that are not upon religious subjects at all, and these questions must be answered. We converse about houses and lands, trades to be made, and locations for our institutions, their advantages and disadvantages.”—[Manuscript 107, 1909](#). (In [Selected Messages 1:38, 39](#)).

31. “I Saw” and “I was Shown”

Mrs. White in books intended for the reading of the general public designedly left out all expressions, “I saw” and “I was shown” lest the readers, being unfamiliar with her experience, should have their minds diverted from the message itself. One looks in vain through the five volumes of the Conflict Series for one such expression, yet in her introduction to *Great Controversy*, the first of the series to appear in 1888, she makes it known that she witnessed the events take place and was “bidden to make known to others that which has been revealed.” (p. xi) Look also at *Steps to Christ*, *Mount of Blessing*, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, *Education*, *Ministry of Healing*. “Sister White is not the originator of these books, she wrote.”

Except for that which is in the nature of the biographical, that [16] which Mrs. White set before the people was based upon the visions given to her, whether or not she used the term “I saw.” She, in her day, and we today, draw the line, not between books and letters, etc., but between the sacred and the common. No person of intelligence will be confused.

32. E. G. White Benefited by the Message Given

“I long to speak to large congregations, knowing that the message is not of myself but that which the Lord impresses upon my mind to utter. I am never left alone when I stand before the people with a message. When before the people there seems to be presented before me the most precious things of the gospel and I participate in the gospel message and feed upon the Word as much as any of the hearers. The sermons do me good, for I have new representations every time I open my lips to speak to the people. I can never doubt my mission for I am a participant in the privileges and am nourished and vivified, knowing that I am called unto the grace of Christ. Every time I set forth the truth to the people, and call their attention to eternal life which Christ has made possible for us to obtain, I am as much benefited as they with most gracious discoveries of the grace and love and the power of God in behalf of His people, in justification and reconciliation with God.”—[Manuscript 174, 1903](#).

33. Giving Up Faith in Testimonies

“One thing is certain; those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan’s banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God’s Spirit.

“The call to greater consecration and holier service is being made, and will continue to be made.”—[Letter 155, 1903](#).

34. E. G. White Writings to Speak to the End

“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, 13, 14](#). (Written Oct. 23, 1907) (In [Selected Messages 1:55](#)).