

Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.
Proprietor of
**ELLEN G. WHITE
PUBLICATIONS**



General Conference
of Seventh-day Adventists
6840 Eastern Avenue, NW.
Washington, D.C. 20012
Phone: (202) 723-0800 Telex: 89-580

J. A.
31-B-252

December 22, 1980

1560 Galaxy Court Rte 5
Mansfield OH

My Dear Brother

Thank you very much for your letter of December 16 addressed to Elder Neal Wilson, President of the General Conference. Your letter of inquiry concerned the present deluge of criticisms launched against Ellen White and accusing her of plagiarism.

Walter Rea, pastor of the Long Beach church, at least until recently, has been the principal proponent of the idea that Mrs. White borrowed most of the material that she used in her writings, from uninspired sources.

In reply, let me say first of all, that Pastor Wilson has passed along this communication from you to the White Estate since we, too, have been the targets of criticism involving the servant of the Lord. In response, let me say as a representative of the White Estate, that Rea's contentions are grossly exaggerated. It is true, however, that Ellen White did utilize uninspired sources occasionally when she was struggling for proper words to embody the ideas that God had communicated to her in vision.

Ellen White had only three grades of education. She was not trained to be a professional historian. When she was discussing events and person-ages in church history, she would sometimes quote reliable church historians for the facts and basic information. Then, in her role, as an interpreter of events and as one to whom God had given instruction on the great controversy between Christ and Satan, she would explain the real meaning of history in the context of this great scene.

Enclosed is a paper prepared in this office by the secretary, Dr. Robert Olson, dealing with the question of Mrs. White's use of uninspired sources. Read it carefully and prayerfully. I think you will find here the answer to your inquiry.

Let me say that I wish to commend you for the fact that you have not been swept off your feet by these charges made by the former pastor of the Long Beach church. Newspapers pick up these exaggerated claims, mostly because there is an element of excitement and controversy in it. Newspapers like to debunk theologians and politicians and to denigrate them

if they can. These "scandal sheets" survive on the sale of their newspapers and they don't sell newspapers unless they can report controversy, violence, sex, disasters,--whatever the people like to hear.

Some newspapers are known for their honest and fair reporting,--like the New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, the Denver Post, and a few others. But most papers will communicate information they have received, generally, without careful checking. That has certainly been the case of the reporting of Mrs. White's use of other authors.


I do not think that we should permit the avalanche of bad news about Ellen White printed in the newspapers to in any way discourage us. Your own experience confirms this idea. You say that your sister from Manchester, Connecticut, has now made inquiry concerning Sister White since she has read the report in the Hartford Courant. Perhaps she never would have made an investigation if this article had not appeared. God is capable of using even the wrath of man to praise Him, as the Bible says.

I know that you will pass along to your sister the information that I am sending to you. I am sending an extra copy of Dr. Olson's pamphlet, thinking that perhaps she might enjoy reading it. Also a copy of my book, Ellen G. White and the SDA Church.

Now concerning the quantity of borrowing. Let me say that if all the writings of Ellen White--100,000 pages, 25 million words, were to be carefully examined, I think we would find that perhaps 98 to 99 percent represents her own words, borrowed from nobody else at all.--Her own words!

In books like Sketches from the Life of Paul, The Great Controversy, we find Ellen White presenting biographical sketches of great church leaders. Here she may have borrowed from church historians, perhaps as much as 7 to 12 percent of the total context. We find her, however, at the same time recommending the books from which she borrowed, to the readers of her own books on the subject. There was no attempt to conceal anything. What she did was customary practice in those times. We can confirm this by reports that emerge from the practice of writers in those days.

Faithfully, in Christ's service,



D. A. Delafield
Associate Secretary

d

enc: Uninspired Sources -- 2
E. G. White and SDA Church