

Ellen G. White and the So-Called "Plagiarism" Charge: An Examination of Five Issues

Roger W. Coon

Introduction

A. Significance of the Topic

1. Of all of the so-called "problem" issues, two, perhaps, have been more successful in destroying confidence in, and the credibility of, Ellen G. White, as a true, authentic prophet of the Lord, than any others:
 - a. Certain statements she made in the realm of the scientific, which at first hearing often engender mirth--and doubts--because, superficially, they appear so improbable, and "off-the-wall," as to make true believers not a little uncomfortable, if not downright embarrassed.
 - b. The so-called "Plagiarism" charge.
2. With regard to the latter, a former SDA minister in Southern California has been the foremost exponent of this serious criticism in the 1980's:
 - a. In the *Los Angeles Times* of Oct. 23, 1980 (and reprinted in *The Washington Post*, on Nov. 7, 1980, page C-1) he made three allegations:
 - (1) Mrs. White is a thief: she stole the literary productions of other authors, and replaced their name with her own.
 - (2) She is, furthermore, a liar: for she repeatedly denied that she did this thing.
 - (3) She and her husband were shameless exploiters of their church members: for they constituted a "captive" merchandise market upon which they forced her writings--requiring members to buy these many volumes--thus making an enormous personal fortune at the expense of their poorer followers.
3. Now, while all three charges are demonstrably false, some of the documentation amassed by this critic superficially appears to lend a certain credibility to his allegations.
 - a. The charge, which, ultimately, goes to the very heart of the question of personal integrity (and, therefore, of believability), is a most serious one--especially for a prophet!
4. A little historical perspective may be helpful at this point:
 - a. This former minister was not the first to make these charges of alleged plagiarism (nor will he be the last); they have been raised before.

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- b. And the charge raises a number of fundamental questions which the church must address.
 - (1) Let us first examine some of the implications.

B. Five Issues Identified:

1. The Definitional Issue:

- a. What is "Plagiarism?"
- b. What is "Literary Borrowing?"
- c. What is the crucial distinction between the two?

2. The Biblical Issue:

- a. Is originality of composition a legitimate, valid test of an authentic prophet?
- b. Is there a Biblical precedent for the phenomenon of "literary borrowing?"
 - (1) If so, to what extent is it observable?
 - (2) Where?
- c. What is the significance of Solomon's declaration (in Eccl. 12:9, 10) concerning his own literary practice in the production of the Book of Proverbs?
- d. Is percentage of borrowing a legitimate issue?

3. The Legal Issue: Did EGW break any of the laws of the land in the pursuit of her literary enterprise?

- a. What aspects of plagiarism are actionable in literary law?
- b. Was EGW (or, subsequently, her Estate) ever sued in a court of law for criminal violation of the law?
 - (1) Was she (or her Estate) ever even *threatened* with such a lawsuit?
- c. What definitive contribution did commercial-law specialist Vincent Ramik make in 1981?

4. The Ethical/Moral Issue: Was what she did *honest*, even if not technically criminal?

Did she deceive (or attempt to deceive) her readers into believing that every word that she ever wrote was of original composition?

- a. Did EGW ever deny her literary borrowing?
- b. Contrarily, in what specific categories of materials did she publicly acknowledge utilizing prior literary materials of other authors?
- c. Was her church leadership (then, or now) guilty of a conspiratorial "cover-up," in an attempt to protect her--and themselves?
- d. How have plagiarism charges surfaced, almost cyclically, throughout SDA denominational history?
 - (1) Were they met?
 - (2) How, and by whom?
- e. What major underlying problem faced church leadership at the 1919 Bible Conference and Bible/History Teachers Conference?
- f. Was James White guilty of overstatement in his defense of his wife's literary practices?
 - (1) Did church leadership deal with that problem? How? When?
- g. Is the Fannie Bolton testimony credible, given her documented history of mental

illness? (See Appendix H.)

5. The Practical Issue:

- a. How does an omniscient God effectively communicate truth to--and through--a comparatively uneducated prophet—especially where a strictly verbal-mechanical view of inspiration is ruled out (as EGW herself precluded its admissibility)?
- b. What testimony did W. C. White provide concerning the Angel Gabriel's assurance to his mother of divine aid, vis-a-vis her physical and educational limitations?
- c. What was EGW's four-point philosophy of sacred composition?
- d. Why did she borrow? What did she borrow?
- e. What did she leave *unborrowed*?
- f. What helpful insights are provided by:
 - (1) Syndicated columnist James J. Kilpatrick, Jr.?
 - (2) 19th-Century Amherst College President Heman Humphrey?

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Four SDA scholars in particular have done exceptionally helpful research in this area, to whom I owe a significant debt of obligation in the preparation of this presentation:

- (1) Dr. Robert W. Olson, now-retired (1990) Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate.
- (2) Dr. Ronald D. Graybill, formerly an Associate Secretary of the White Estate, and, later, Chair of the Department of History and Political Science, La Sierra University.
- (3) White Estate Archivist Timothy L. Poirier
- (4) Dr. Fred Veltman, former chair of the Pacific Union College Religion Department, whose thorough study of literary borrowing in *The Desire of Ages* provides the most exhaustive study of its kind ever undertaken in SDA scholarly circles.

I. The Definitional Issue

1. The late Dr. Charles E. Weniger, Dean of the SDA Theological Seminary and teacher of one of its courses in research methodology, often told his students that:
 - a. "All research begins with the dictionary."
2. And, at the outset, it is crucially important to distinguish between two separate, but related, terms:
 - a. "**Plagiarism**," concerning which we shall demonstrate that EGW was *not* guilty, and
 - b. "**Literary Borrowing**," a practice in which not only she, but also many of the writers of the Bible, engaged.

A. "Plagiarism"

1. Basically, the term itself comes from the Latin *plagiarium*, which means, literally, "kidnapper"! (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, 1959).
 - (a) (Incidentally, the word immediately following "plagiarism" in many dictionaries is "plague"--a most appropriate, if purely coincidental, association!)
2. And all authorities generally tend to agree that the term generally applies to the intentionally deliberate--and unauthorized--appropriation by one writer of the words of another, in the process passing them off as if they were his own--a sort of literary embezzlement.
3. The literary thief's motivation may be simply fame, or financial benefit, or both.
4. In American literary law, plagiarism, *per se*, is not a crime by statute definition; but two crimes are inextricably associated with it:
 - a. Copyright infringement.
 - b. Literary theft.
5. In short, plagiarism, then, is a literary masquerade as to the identity of the true author--one's attempt to pretend that he is the original author, when he is not.
 - a. Plagiarism, however, is *not necessarily* the borrowing of another writer's ideas or words, and employing them in one's own material, for one's own literary ends..
 - (1) And this, precisely, is where the rub most often comes.

B. "Literary Borrowing"

1. "Literary Borrowing," on the other hand, occurs when one writer utilizes and employs--"borrows"--the ideas, words, or expressions of another, for his own personal literary ends, for the purpose of making a particular point.
 - a. Analogy: Hyperbole is not mere exaggeration, but exaggeration for the precise purpose of making a particular point.
2. The question of the identity of the original author is not, here, the germane issue (as it is in plagiarism).
 - a. And the practice of literary borrowing does not, *ipso facto*, constitute plagiarism.
 - b. Literary law recognizes what it defines as the "fair use" by one writer, of the ideas and even of the words of another, and of converting them to serve the particular purpose of the second writer (apart, of course, from pretending to be the original author--*that's* plagiarism!).
 - c. And literary law specifically exempts such "fair use" practice from the arena of plagiarism.

C. Drawing the Distinction: Illustrations

1. Glen Baker, one of my former Seminary students, wrote an article for the *Adventist Review* on EGW's use of humor, after having listened to my lecture on that subject.
 - a. In it he offered 16 examples of her humor, only two of which he had gleaned from my presentation.
 - b. Now those two instances involved literary borrowing on the part of the former student from his professor's lecture notes.
 - c. But his was an entirely new work (though on the same subject as was my lecture), into which he incorporated some of my research material.
 - (1) But, in so doing, he did not commit an act of plagiarism.
2. On the other hand, a highly-respected fellow SDA Bible teacher from another school, took the outline of a lecture I had given at PUC on conditional immortality, and incorporated it--almost completely, with my own ideas, my own research data, my own organizational plan, in my own sequential order--into an article he wrote for one of our SDA evangelistic periodicals, and then he had the temerity to place his name on the article as author of my work!
 - a. In the writing process, he added virtually nothing original of his own, while slavishly following the sequence of my progression of thought and my research data.
 - b. And he was guilty of plagiarism, purely and simply!
3. Again, another former student, from a different college, took 15 pages from one of my lecture outlines on the subject of Sunday legislation, and incorporated it, *en toto*, without any additions to, or deletions from, my material, into a document in which he identified himself as the original author.
 - a. And that, too, was plagiarism.
 - (1) And plagiarism is morally wrong.
4. It is absolutely imperative that we make the proper distinction between plagiarism and literary borrowing, even if by so doing critics level the charge at us of attempting "to make the worse appear the better reason."
 - a. Aristophanes, by the way, wrote that line, in 423 B.C.
 - b. John Milton, in 1667 A.D., incorporated it into the epic poem he was composing, *Paradise Lost*--and without ever giving Aristophanes any credit!
 - (1) Was Milton guilty of plagiarism? Probably not.
5. Plagiarism is just plain wrong, and nothing good can be said about it.
 - a. It is unjustifiable, and morally reprehensible.
 - b. And under certain circumstances, in certain manifestations, it may also involve a criminal act.
6. But EGW did *not* engage in plagiarism, though she--as well as Bible writers--did engage in literary borrowing, often on an extensive basis--as we shall note next.
 - a. But in doing, none were guilty of plagiarism--and they did no wrong.

II. The Biblical Issue

1. *Originality of composition is not a valid Biblical test of a true prophet*--because the inspired Bible writers not only borrowed from each other, but they also borrowed from other non-inspired writers, in the preparation of many of their respective books.
 - a. And, as a result, the Bible is chock-a-block full of such literary borrowing, from beginning to end.
 - b. Now, today, no one makes a big issue over that (perhaps because many, if not most, Christians are blissfully unaware of that salient fact!).
 - c. But let EGW follow squarely in this well-marked-out Biblical tradition and precedent, and the critics instantly make a big hue-and-cry.
 - (1) Interesting, isn't it!
 - (2) In fact, it almost makes one wonder why?--what is the underlying motivation of the critic?

2. The Bible is replete with literary borrowing, from the Pentateuch (where Moses copied a law of Hammurabi, a Babylonian king and law-giver, who lived at least 250 years earlier) to the final book of Revelation (where John repeatedly incorporated large segments from a work entitled *The Book of Enoch*, written probably 150 years before John's feet ever touched the soil of Patmos).

a. Now the prophet Enoch did *not* write this particular volume which bears his name as its author.

b. It was, in fact, composed several millennia after Enoch's translation to heaven.

(1) It was written about 150 BC by an obscure, unknown author, who appended Enoch's name, probably thinking that this act would increase readership of his book

(2) Such works were quite popular and common at that time--and were technically known as "pseudepigraphical" writings.

3. Jesus was a literary borrower:

a. He used the language, imagery, and ideas of others in publicly presenting His:

(1) "Golden rule" (from Rabbi Hillel, a century earlier).

(2) The Lord's Prayer (from an earlier Jewish ritual prayer, the *Ha-Kaddish*).

4. And the Apostle Paul borrowed a line from the 6th Century BC philosopher Epimenedes--and never took the trouble to identify the original author to Titus, with whom he shared it (in Titus 1:12; Acts 17:28).

a. (For more examples of literary borrowing in the Bible, see **Appendix A**.)

5. Many are surprised to learn (and from Solomon's own words) that he is *not* the author of *all* of the sayings included in his Biblical book of Proverbs!

a. In Eccl. 12:9, 10, Solomon frankly declares that he borrowed wise sayings of other different sages, which he incorporated into his Book of Proverbs.

b. He openly states that he "sought out" (KJV, Amp.), or "searched out" (NIV, NASB)--even "amended" (Jer.)--many proverbs which were originally authored by another.

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- c. Then he goes on: I methodically "arranged" (RSV, NASB), or "set in order" (KJV, Amp., NIV) these gems from another's pen, to suit my own literary purposes.
 - d. And, finally, he avers: that which I collected and set down were "words of "truth" (KJV, RSV, NASB)--even though their original author was an uninspired writer!
 - e. And all of this was done, mind you, under the sovereign superintendency of the the Holy Spirit--who, unquestionably, also guided Solomon away from other proverbs which were *not* truth!
 - (1) Solomon's declaration in Eccl. 12:9, 10, manifestly, could not be true if Solomon were the sole, original author of all of those Proverbs!
 - f. In the production of that book, Solomon probably acted more in the role of an anthologist, or editor, rather than in the role of original author.
 - (1) (For various renderings of this passage in contemporary translations, see **Appendix B.**)
6. The late General Conference Vice President Willis J. Hackett, in a 1980 sermon on the mechanics of inspiration/revelation, at the Potomac Camp meeting, put it in this helpful fashion:
- a. "A prophet's words or ideas are not true because the prophet says them; but, the prophet says them because they are true."
 - b. Originality of composition is *not* a legitimate test of a true prophet; it cannot be, because of the widespread practice of literary borrowing by writers of the Bible!
7. Another non-issue is the question of the percentage or volume of borrowed materials by one author of another.
- a. For if one allows for the legitimacy of literary borrowing at all (and one must, because the Bible writers did it with such regularity), then the question of percentage of borrowed material (which some critics blow up into a major issue) is really an irrelevance.
 - b. One prominent critic has loudly alleged that between 80% and 90% of EGW's writings were borrowed from the works of others.
 - (1) We have just noted, however, that this is a non-issue.
 - (2) But it is still worth noting that his "guesstimates" were, nonetheless, wildly inflated.
 - (a) Tim Poirier's "Project Surprise (1981-86) reveals that, with the exception of five EGW books, the known documented borrowed material in her writings amounted to *less than three percent per book!*
 - (b) And in *The Great Controversy*, the work in which the largest volume of borrowed material is to be found, only 5% of borrowed material had uncredited author-identification!
8. Literary borrowing, on a very substantial scale, is found throughout the entire Bible, in both Old and New Testament s.
- a. And EGW's practice merely follows in the well-trod footsteps of the inspired Biblical writers, who established this practice as a

legitimate precedent millennia before her day!

III. The Legal Issue

1. Certain aspects of plagiarism are defined as criminal acts under the statutes of American literary law.
 - a. Interestingly, neither aggrieved authors nor publishers have ever been noticeably reticent to hale suspected offenders into court, particularly if they even suspected that monetary damages might thereby be recovered!
 - b. Critics, from earliest days, have hinted darkly that EGW was sued--or at least threatened with a suit--for engaging in plagiaristic activities.
 - (1) But all such allegations are totally without foundation in fact.
2. Although inquiries about similarities between Mrs. White's writings and those of other authors have surfaced in public as early as 1867, formal accusations of plagiarism seem to have been first raised in 1889, by a disgruntled ex-SDA minister, Dudley M. Canright; and, interestingly, they have continued to reappear with almost cyclical regularity ever since.
3. In the autumn of 1981, Attorney Warren L. Johns, then chief legal counsel in the General Conference's Office of Legal Counsel, upon reading the latest salvo in the Oct. 23, 1980 *Los Angeles Times* (and reprinted in *The Washington Post*, Nov. 7, 1980, p. C-1), decided he would try to get to the bottom of the legal issue, and determine, once and for all, if possible, their veracity in a summary fashion.
 - a. Using private funds, he engaged the services of Attorney Vincent Ramik, senior partner in the then-Washington, DC-based law firm of Diller, Ramik, and Wight, specialists in patent, trademark, and copyright law.
 - (1) (Their offices have since been relocated in Annandale, VA.)
4. Attorney Ramik was provided for his research:
 - a. All allegations of plagiarism, historically, from first to last.
 - b. Copies of all denominational polemical defenses against these critical charges.
 - c. The relevant EGW books which were the target of the charges.
5. He later reported that his initial reaction leaned in favor of the validity of the critical charges, as alleged by various plaintiffs.
 - a. But as his research progressed, and deepened, his verdict began to shift in favor of the defendant!
 - b. Ramik spent more than 300 hours, in researching more than 1,000 cases in American literary law (1790-1915); and he produced a 27-page legal opinion (a "lawyer's brief"), containing 53 source-citation footnotes, in which he concluded flatly that EGW was not guilty, either of copyright infringement, nor of literary theft.
 - (1) In fact, were she alive today, and the subject of litigation, he added, he would volunteer his own services to defend her in court--because "there simply is no case" for the prosecution.

- c. The critics, he declared in a subsequent two-hour interview in which I participated, had mistakenly focused upon mere words, while ignoring altogether (and totally missing) her message, and, particularly, the manner in which she used those words.
 - d. Her writings were all, he declared, well within the established boundaries of the legal doctrine of "fair use" in literary law, as regards the permissible use by one writer of another's literary materials.
 - e. And then he offered an unsolicited personal testimony concerning the effect upon himself in the course of reading *The Great Controversy*, and several other EGW books in the course of his legal research:
 - (1) "I am a changed man; I will never again be the same Vince Ramik that I was before," he declared with some vigor.
6. As a postscript to the interview, after its findings were published, the chief critic in Los Angeles, upon hearing that Ramik had exonerated EGW of all charges of plagiarism, sneered, "Of course he came down on her side; look at that enormous amount of money for which he was paid for his work!"
- a. Ramik retorted by stating that the total income from his work in this particular case represented a mere one-tenth of one percent of his law firm's gross earnings for the year 1981!
 - b. He then followed up with the ominous observation that "Lawyers who tell their clients only that which they think their clients wish to hear, soon have no clients!"
 - (1) "A lawyer's job," he went on, "is to protect his client, by presenting the worst possible scenario in every instance."
 - (a) (For more information on the Ramik Report, see the eight-page *Adventist Review* reprint of three articles by RWC and an editorial by Kenneth H. Wood, which originally appeared in its Sept. 17, 1981 edition.)
7. Finally, neither Mrs. White (nor her Estate, since her death) has ever been sued in a court of law, or even threatened with legal remedies, as a result of suspected plagiarism.
- a. And a highly-respected attorney-specialist in copyright law, after more than 300 hours of research, in more than 1,000 cases in American literary law (1790-1915), totally exonerated EGW of all charges of plagiarism!

IV. The Moral/Ethical Issue

1. "Well," the critic may concede at this point, "perhaps Mrs. White was not technically guilty of breaking the law against plagiarism; but, certainly, going around and denying her literary borrowing--when the evidence clearly demonstrates that she *did* borrow the literary materials of other writers--that's hardly an *honest* thing to do."
 - a. And so we shall address, next, the Moral/Ethical Issue.
 - b. Because--no doubt about it--a prophet's credibility would certainly be impaired

by such gross behavior, if what the critic alleges actually happened.

2. And I, in turn, inquire of the critic: "Did she really claim that every word that she ever wrote came directly from God, and was thus original with her? You see, the burden of proof here rests squarely upon the critic.
 - a. And I, for myself, have not yet seen any conclusive evidence that such was the case.
 - b. Oh, yes, I've seen that broadside containing a dozen or 15 statements from her pen, circulated in Australia and America in the early 1980's by her then-chief critic, artfully contrived to make it *look* like that's what she claimed--that all words were original with her.
 - b. But a careful examination of those selected quotations reveals that every single *one* of them was cleverly, adroitly, *taken out of the original context*, and then compiled in such a way as to create the appearance of a false "reality!"

A. "The Words . . . Are My Own"

1. Let me offer a typical example from this misleading document which received such wide circulation, and show you *what* she said, the *context* in which she said it, and then you decide for yourself if the ethical problem here is not, rather, with the compiler than the accused:
 - a. In the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* of Oct. 8, 1867, EGW did, indeed, write:
 - (1) Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.--ISM 37.
2. But she was not--as this sentence, torn from its original context, seems superficially to suggest--declaring that *every word she ever wrote* was thus original with her. Far from it!
 - a. In this RH column, this out-of-context sentence actually appeared in response to a very specific inquiry from a reader in "Question and Answer No. 2!"
 - b. By way of background, EGW had, earlier, written variously concerning the ideal length of a woman's skirt in that Victorian age. And she had recommended, successively, that:
 - (1) It should **clear the filth** of the street **by an inch or two** (Testimony No. 10).
 - (2) It should come somewhere **below the top** of a lady's gaiter boot (Testimony No. 11).
 - (3) It should be **nine inches above** the floor (Testimony No. 12).
 - c. And the reader was inquiring, in effect: That expression--"nine inches"--were those **your** words, or were they the *angel's* words? (It apparently was important that the reader know!)
3. Now note Mrs. White's very first words in reply:
 - a. "The proper distance . . . was not given to me in inches."

- b. Then, a few lines below, she explained the background circumstances: she had seen, in vision, three groups of women, with varying hem lines, one of which the angel had declared to be the ideal.
 - (1) Then, she went on, I took an especially good look at the group designated as ideal, and estimated the approximate length to be about nine inches from the floor.
 - c. So, you see, when Mrs. White said, "Nine inches," she was responding to a specific question (*Your words, or the angel's words?*) when she declared, "the words . . . are my own."
 - (1) (For the complete text of "Question and Answer No. 2," see **Appendix C.**)
4. So, you see, to lift that single sentence ("the words...are my own...") totally out of its original context, to make it appear that EGW was thus declaring that *all* of the words that she ever wrote were her own (unless otherwise designated), itself creates a moral/ethical problem upon the part of those who would seek to mislead you by such stratagem!

B. Her Ideas: From Contemporary Writers, or From God?

1. But the question remains--and demands an honest answer: Did EGW attempt to hide the fact of her literary borrowing, and thus to mislead her followers?
 - a. Again, we respond with an emphatic: No!
 - b. For on that same page of the 1867 RH, in "Question and Answer No. One," EGW responded to another reader who was apparently suspicious of the source of some of her health reform writings--did they come from certain contemporary writers (as the reader implied), or did they come directly from God in a vision?
3. And in the last two sentences of her reply, EGW declared that while the *information* originated with God, yet she nevertheless *did*--somewhat later--share with her readers some items from the writings of certain contemporary health reformers.
 - a. And she tells us further, *why* she did it: to show that some (though not all) of the things which they wrote were in agreement with God's ideas!
 - (1) (For the complete text of "Question and Answer No. 1," see **Appendix D.**)
 - b. But let us at least be honest enough, at this point, to note that:
 - (1) She did not deny literary borrowing--she, in fact, declared it.
 - (2) And she went further, to explain the reason for it.
 - c. This is hardly the blanket denial alleged by the critic!
3. Let us offer yet another evidence that she publicly proclaimed her use of the writings of other writers--far from attempting to evade, or hide that fact:
 - a. In the "Introduction" to *The Great Controversy*--right at the very outset--she informs the reader that, at times, she incorporated into her manuscript certain theological writings of others:

(1) 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 the statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject. [Also] In narrating the experiences and views of those carrying forward the work of reform in our own time, *similar use has been made* of their published works.--GC xii, emphasis supplied.

b. Please note, again: far from denying the use of materials from other authors, EGW here straight-forwardly makes two cogent points:

- (1) She declares that she *did* engage in literary borrowing.
- (2) And she then goes on to tell us the reason *why* she did it!

b. And one can only speculate as to the motivation of critics, who, in the face of such obvious contrary evidence, themselves continue to attempt to mislead by alleging dishonest practices upon the part of the prophet!

C. A "Cover-Up" by Church Leaders?

1. Another favorite issue raised by critics is the question of whether or not SDA church leaders--in her day, or in ours--have been guilty of a conspiratorial "cover-up" of EGW's literary borrowing, in an attempt to protect her--and themselves, as well.

a. In response, let us note, first, the rather cyclical nature of the repeated charges of plagiarism, and then examine--in detail--the nature of the subsequent official response by church leaders.

2. As already noted, perhaps the first public *inquiry* (in contradistinction with *accusation*) concerning alleged literary borrowing appeared in that 1867 RH column of "Questions and Answers."

3. Critical Charges:

a. 1889: By contrast, the first *accusation* of wrong-doing seems to have been made by ex-SDA preacher Dudley M. Canright in the first of his two books against his former church and its prophet (*Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*).

b. 1907: Battle Creek Sanitarium staff physician Dr. Charles E. Stewart (and confidant of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, who harbored similar views) brought out his famous "Blue Book" (so identified because of the color of its cover, if not the nature of its torrid allegations of plagiarism), in which he rehashes various then-contemporary charges of literary misuse.

c. 1930's: E. S. Ballenger (brother of Albion Fox B., and son of John Fox B.--all three of them defrocked dissident ex-SDA ministers!)--replayed the same repetitious charges in his polemical anti-SDA periodical, *The Gathering Call* (see *SDA Encyclopedia*, I [1996]: 156, 157).

- d. 1976: Dr. Ronald L. Numbers viciously attacked the prophet in his *Ellen G. White: Prophetess of Health*. In four enumerated assumptions held generally by SDAs (Preface: 1976 ed., pp. xi, xii; 1992 ed., pp. xv, xvi), Numbers disassociates--and distances--himself from the idea that EGW was ever in possession of inspired materials. Rather, he alleges she simply copied ideas of contemporary health reformers, palming them off as her own.
- e. 1982: In 1980, now ex-SDA minister Walter T. Rea began to fulminate against EGW by resurrecting earlier charges of plagiarism (which had been answered earlier--see below), culminating in the private publication of a cynical, sardonic, sarcastic, innuendo-laced tirade, *The White Lie*.
- e. Well, those are the principal players throughout the cyclical, rather repetitious past century of repeated accusations of plagiarism against EGW.
 - (1) Did the church respond?
 - (2) And, if so, in what manner?

4. The Church Responds:

- a. 1867: We have already noted in detail the concerned inquiries of RH readers to perceived literary misuse in the Oct. 8 issue; and EGW herself personally--and promptly--responded in her own vigorous, spirited, forthright defense.
- b. 1888: We, also, have noted the publication of the "Introduction" to *The Great Controversy*, in which--far from denying literary borrowing, EGW publicly proclaimed that fact, even indicating several different categories employed in this particular work, and explaining in detail her personal reasons for so doing (which hardly qualifies as a legitimate effort at "cover-up"!).
 - (1) [NOTE: In that same year the same publisher brought out the 2nd ed. of James White's *Life Sketches* (not to be confused with his wife's work of an identical title) in which the publisher deleted certain overstatements made by Elder White in the 1st ed., 1880, before his death the year following. We will consider James White's somewhat exaggerated and--today--difficult-to-understand declarations in detail, below.]
- c. 1933: In August, William C. White and Dores E. Robinson of the White Estate jointly authored a 16-pp. document entitled *Brief Statements Regarding the Writings of Ellen G. White*, in which the church--again--officially-met the plagiarism charges then circulating, in a forthright, head-on manner. (This document, incidentally, was reprinted in full, and published as an insert in the *Adventist Review* of June 4, 1981, in response to the old resurrected charges now confronting a new audience unfamiliar with them.)
- d. 1951: Francis D. Nichol, then RH editor, and prolific author of SDA polemical works, wrote an encyclopedic reference work, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, in which sought to gather, analyze, and catalogue every criticism ever made of EGW. He devoted three full chapters--28, 29, and 30--in an attempt to settle, once-for-all, persistently recurring charges in the area of plagiarism.

- e. **1976:** The White Estate voluntarily reviewed the manuscript for Dr. Number's proposed book, and pointed out countless examples of egregious (and fully explainable) distortions therein. Wisely, the author deleted these from the final draft before publication; but when the book finally appeared (published by the prestigious house of Harper & Row), the entire staff of the White Estate dropped all other activity, and devoted six full months to producing a 128-page response, in an almost line-for-line refutation of misleading, inaccurate, and cleverly-contrived criticisms still retained in the final published version.
- f. **1980:** Dr. Robert W. Olson, then-White Estate Secretary, issued the first in what eventually, would become a torrent of "reality-checks") in a new series of White Estate position-paper monograph responses to Walter Rea's loudly- and widely-heralded critical attacks (chiefly in the area of plagiarism), entitled "Ellen White's Use of Inspired Sources."
- g. **1981:** It was quickly followed by three documents the next year:
- (1) Dr. Ron Graybill's 45-pp. significant, landmark monograph, "Ellen G. White's Literary Work--An Update."
 - (2) Dr. Olson's 112-pp. book, *One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White.*, in which plagiarism received major detailed treatment.
 - (3) Dr. Roger W. Coon's three articles, and Kenneth H. Wood's editorial, published in the Sept. 17 edition of the *Adventist Review*, were subsequently reprinted as a separate 8-pp. document.
- h. **1982:** Two additional significant contributions followed:
- (1) Warren H. Johns 14-pp. article, "Prophet or Plagiarist?," was published in the June edition of *Ministry*.
 - (2) Dr. Graybill edited a 16-pp. supplement to the August edition of *Ministry*, which surveyed--and briefly responded to--a dozen or so of the principal accusations of Walter Rea, and provided an exhaustively-detailed bibliography where more data could be found.
- i. **1981-88:** Dr. Fred Veltman, meanwhile, under direct assignment by the General Conference President, devoted eight years to the preparation of an exceedingly detailed analysis of 15 chapters of *The Desire of Ages*. Within that time frame he spent the equivalent of five full years in the task of producing a 2,561-pp. report (958 pp. of text, the balance, exhibits). In the 15 selected chapters of his survey, Dr. Veltman discovered that while EGW had used materials from 23 other literary works, "she was not slavishly dependent upon her sources, and the way she incorporated their content clearly shows that . . . she knew how to separate the wheat from the chaff"!
- j. **1986:** Two significant publications followed:
- (1) Dr. Olson's 9-pp. monograph, "The Literary Borrowing Issue," was released (and subsequently revised and enlarged on Feb. 8, 1989).
 - (2) On Oct. 14, Tim Poirier's three-page summary report on "Project Surprise" documented all known literary parallels (research was begun in 1981) and proved conclusively that estimates ranging from 80%-90% of borrowed materials were grossly inflated:

- (a) GC had 15.1% quoted, with source indicated, and an additional 5.1% uncredited, for a total of 20.5% overall.
 - (b) *Sketches from the Life of Paul* had 12.23% borrowed material.
 - (c) The total for *Steps to Christ's* was 6.2%.
 - (d) All other books--excluding DA, which Dr. Veltman studied--came in at 3% or less for borrowed material.
- k. 1990: Dr. Olson prepared a new 5-pp. statement on "Plagiarism" for an EGW Estate Research Center Directors Workshop, in which he recapitulated the main lines of previous research findings.
- l. From all of the foregoing, it must be patently obvious that church leadership--at the highest levels--did *not* seek to ignore, sweep under the carpet, or "cover-up" challenges to EGW's literary practices. On the contrary, they met the issues forthrightly, head-on, with honest facts carefully stated (and spent a lot of money in the process!). The result of this mammoth effort would, for most in the church, put to rest the issue of plagiarism (until a new generation arises, and the whole thing must be replayed all over again!).
- (1) But seriously to suggest a "cover-up," in the face of this Niagara of official church response, is so absurd as hardly to deserve a serious response.

D. Problems Facing Leadership at the 1919 Bible Conference

1. The discovery of a long-forgotten verbatim transcript of the July / August 1919 SDA Bible Conference and Bible/History Teachers Conference which immediately followed (with its subsequent publication in *Spectrum's* May, 1979 issue) has raised serious questions about the degree to which church leadership was willing publicly to deal forthrightly--and to be forthcoming--in meeting certain questions concerning EGW's literary practices--chiefly in the area of plagiarism.
- a. A certain amount of disingenuousness does appear to have been evinced by some denominational leaders.
 - b. But those convocations--with the corresponding attitudes and actions of church leadership--must be viewed in the light of the broader historical context of the decade which immediately preceded these meetings.
2. By 1910, major skeptical inroads were being made in USA religious scholarship against Biblical teaching and authority within Protestantism.
- a. "Modernism," a new--and growing--religious phenomenon, denied:
 - (1) The divine inspiration of the Bible.
 - (2) The virgin birth of Christ.
 - (3) Christ's substitutionary atonement at Calvary.
 - (4) His literal resurrection from the grave.
 - (5) The objective reality of miracles as recorded in Scripture.
 - b. Various theologians began to rise to defend "the faith once delivered to the saints:"
 - (1) Between 1910-15, a series of 12 small books, containing 94 articles and essays, written by some 64 authors, were published, known

collectively as *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*.

- (2) Some 27 essays specifically dealt with the new menace of Higher (Biblical) Criticism.
3. One of the two benchmark issues for "Fundamentalists" was the divine inspiration of the Bible, which Modernists unabashedly denied altogether.
 - a. Virtually all of the defenders of Biblical inspiration/revelation were themselves believers in a strict verbal mechanical view of inspiration--the idea that Bible writers were merely "stenographers," taking down verbatim dictation from God Himself.
 - b. And in one of the public relations victories of the decade, these Fundamentalists succeeded, to an almost unbelievable degree, in equating belief in the inspiration of the Bible with the verbal/mechanical view in the popular, public mind.
 - c. The inevitable result? There were really only two positions: one either believed in the inspiration of the Bible on their terms (verbal dictation, literal inerrancy--no mistakes of any kind in the Bible); or one was a Modernist who denied Biblical inspiration altogether.
4. Meanwhile, in May, 1918, the first major Fundamentalist conference--the Philadelphia Prophetic Convention--was held. Some 5,000 thronged the 12 sessions; and it, too, was a public relations success, with the press playing up the meetings on Page One. Everyone was talking about the Fundamentalists, and their views.
5. Then (and, possibly significantly) exactly one year later, in the Spring of 1919 just one month before the SDA Bible Conference and Bible/History Teachers Conference was set to convene), a second Fundamentalist conference was called, this time in Chicago on the campus of the Moody Bible Institute.
 - a. It, too, was an almost instant media success.
 - b. A new organization was created: the "World's Christian Fundamentals Association."
 - c. And, inevitably, their position on the inspiration of the Bible came into prominent view.
6. This placed the SDA leaders on the horns of a very nasty dilemma:
 - a. For, in reality, they could neither subscribe to the rigid view of the Fundamentalists on the one hand, nor yet to the Modernist view which denied Biblical inspiration altogether.
 - b. EGW had held to a *third* view--that of thought (plenary) inspiration--a concept largely unknown then, in the wildly polemical climate of theological debate.
7. Adventist leaders took seriously their responsibility to the church and the world; and, quite frankly, they were not at all clear as to the best approach to take, to avoid misunderstanding in the respective camps of the Fundamentalists, the Modernists, and the Adventists.
 - a. And, as so often happens even yet today, fearful of doing the *wrong* thing, they pretty much wound up doing *no* thing.

- b. Leadership was probably more cautious than timorous--but, in the end, the result was probably about the same.
- c. And today's readers of the transcript of that meeting of 75 years ago often arrive--unwittingly--at wrong conclusions, being unaware of the background of events as set forth above.

E. James White's Curious References to His Wife's Work

1. In the first edition of James White's *Life Sketches* (not to be confused with his wife's book of the same title), published by the church in 1880 (the year before JW died), this co-founder of the SDA Church clearly overstated the case for his wife's originality of composition vis-a-vis the charges of plagiarism.
 - a. In a word, James, while not flatly, outright denying that his wife had taken any of her literary gems of thought from other writers, yet did use some admittedly exaggerated language in making his case for the defense, which did not reflect accurately the reality that others, later, would discover.
(1) (For the text of his remarks, see **Appendix E.**)
2. When the church got around to issuing the 2nd edition of James' *Life Sketches* in 1888, they revised portions of the text, in the process deleting the inaccurate references James had made in his 1st edition (But, though some critics know this, they often won't admit it until pressed by defenders of EGW!--which raises a separate moral/ethical issue.)
3. But how may we account for Elder White's seeming hypocrisy in potentially, at least, misleading his fellow church members? Three possible explanations occur to me as I ponder the issue of Elder White's intellectual integrity--and this singularly embarrassing literary lapse on his part:
 - a. It may have been caused simply by ignorance on his part: he himself may not have fully realized the extent to which his wife was utilizing the writings of others by incorporating them into her own works.
 - b. His mental state at this particular time of writing could easily have affected his judgment--for by the time he wrote these lines he had already suffered two or three strokes. And his post-stroke physical condition may well have altered, seriously, his mental balance, just as it also markedly affected his personality. Thus, these medical mishaps may well have contributed substantially to his unfortunate error in judgment.
 - c. Or changing realities may well have entered into the equation. While JW's *1st* edition was *published* in 1880, it was obviously *written* at a still earlier date. And, at the time James White *wrote* the offending words (in contradistinction to when they were subsequently *published*), his wife, indeed, may well not have been going into literary borrowing as heavily as we know she did subsequently in the 1880's and onward.
4. I have not yet seen any evidence that EGW ever denied--or tried to hide--her literary borrowing--a practice fully entered into by many of the writers of the Bible.

- a. On the contrary, we have noted that she herself declared--in print, in different places, and upon different occasions--that she *had* used the literary materials of other writers--particularly identifying the categories of
 - (1) Health.
 - (2) History
 - (3) Theology.
- b. And her church leadership, far from covering up these activities, historically and consistently sought to meet the false charges of plagiarism up-front, with extensively detailed explanation and documentation.

V. The Practical Issue

1. Heaven was confronted with a practical problem: How does an omniscient God communicate truth--to and through--a comparatively uneducated prophet?
 - a. Now this is not a new problem for God.
 - (1) In Bible times, while some prophets were well-educated, others were virtually unschooled.
 - b. And so it was with Ellen White, whose total formal education did not see the completion of the first four years of elementary (primary) classroom training.
2. EGW repeatedly, publicly, mourned her own lack of formal education (3SM 90).
 - a. Indeed, this was one of the principal reasons why she also needed, over the years, a corps of literary helpers, to assist in editing (but not authoring) procedures (see 3SM 88-124).
 - b. (But the question of the role of her literary helpers is a topic that must await further, full-scale treatment in another lecture.)
3. The Lord had a solution for Ellen's problem--for He always does; for was it not Paul who declared, "My God shall supply all your needs"? (Phil. 4:19)
 - a. And God sent His angel Gabriel to open His solution to Ellen's understanding.
 - b. Speaking of the event years later, Willie White (her son, who, after the passing of his father in 1881, became her traveling companion, confidant, and counselor) reported:
 - (1) In her early experience, when she was sorely distressed over the difficulty of putting into human language the revelations of truths that had been imparted to her, she was reminded of the fact that all wisdom and knowledge comes from God; and she was assured that God would bestow grace and guidance. She was told that, in the reading of religious books and journals, she would find precious gems of truth, expressed in acceptable language; and that she would be given help from heaven to recognize these, and to separate them from the rubbish of error with which she would sometimes find them

associated.--*Brief Statements*, p. 5.

4. Many, out of curiosity (and probably others, out of cynicism) have sometimes inquired: "Why did EGW have to borrow the literary materials of others? Wouldn't it have been much easier for God simply to dictate to her, as a sort of cosmic stenographer, the messages He wished to communicate to His people?"
 - a. And, unhesitatingly, I answer, Yes, it probably would have been easier--certainly, more efficient. But, you see, God doesn't operate in that fashion.
 - (1) He didn't in Bible times; and He doesn't now.
 - b. As Ellen herself explained:
 - (1) It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions, but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts.--1SM 21.

A. Ellen White's Philosophy of Sacred Composition

1. Central to the arriving at any adequate understanding of Mrs. White's literary borrowing must be an understanding of her philosophy of sacred composition, which, I believe, may be summed up in the following four points:
 - a. **First:** There is no basis for human pre-eminence, because—ultimately--*there is nothing totally original in this world*. Solomon said it best: "There is no new thing under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9).
 - b. **Second:** *Christ was the Originating Creator* of all true ideas (as well as of everything else that is good).
 - c. **Third:** Because Christ is the Originator of all true ideas, *He is also the Owner of those ideas*, as well.
 - d. **Fourth:** EGW envisaged herself, ultimately, as the special agent, chosen by God, to convey ancient truths in modern garb to her generation--and ours. And *it is this truth--not the vehicle in which it is conveyed--that ultimately is the only truly important issue*.
 - (1) (For an expanded amplification of EGW's Philosophy of Sacred Composition, see **Appendix F**.)

B. Why EGW Borrowed Materials From Other Authors

1. Dr. Robert Olson has suggested four reasons, to which I will add a possible fifth:
 - a. **First:** To help her express well the ideas and truths revealed to her in vision.
 - (1) She not only had to face the limitations of her formal schooling, but she had another limitation with which to deal: the limitation of time--the amount of time in her daily schedule available to the writing tasks, a factor with which she had constantly to deal.
 - (2) So, if other writers had said essentially the same thing that she wished to say, there would be a definite economy in time if she could simply employ their words, instead of having to take the time and effort merely to compose parallel prose.

- (a) In short, EGW saw no necessity to have constantly to "reinvent the wheel," so to speak.
- b. **Second:** To supplement details *not* given in vision.
- (1) EGW was often obliged to do post-vision research, to round out for print the account of an incident seen in vision--details of history, geography, chronology, etc.
- (2) But it should also ever be remembered that EGW used historical materials to *illustrate*, but never to *prove*--and that distinction is crucial.
- c. **Third:** To embellish the literary elements with beautiful gems of thought, for purposes of literary adornment:
- (1) *Aesthetic* reasons : EGW was a lover of the beautiful--including beautifully-phrased prose.
- (2) *Reverent* reasons: she wanted her work to bring honor and glory to God and His truth.
- (3) *Psychological* reasons: EGW well understood the pedagogical values in repetition and restatement as a device to impress human memory.
- d. **Fourth:** To explain, adequately and meaningfully, Adventist doctrinal positions to her fellow church members.
- (1) Again, if others had phrased an idea felicitously, why not use it--and get as much mileage out of it as possible? (See Robert W. Olson, *One Hundred and One Questions*, pp. 71-73.)
- e. **Fifth:** EGW's literary borrowing just may have been a subconscious exercise of a possible photographic memory.
- (1) During the week, for example, she would often read materials from various authors.
- (2) Then, upon the Sabbath, speaking extemporaneously in some church pulpit, without notes (as she often did), the Holy Spirit might well have suddenly brought to her mind something she had read earlier in the week--truths beautifully expressed by some other--uninspired--author.
- (3) She, of course, would not "footnote" her sermon at this point--indeed, she may even have been totally unaware that she was mirroring something from another writer read earlier in the week.
- (a) But, of course, her stenographers were always present, to record in shorthand every word she uttered in public.
- (b) And, later, the typewritten manuscript of that sermon would often find its way into various periodical articles and book chapters.
- (4) It is, of course, impossible to "prove" conclusively that EGW had a photographic memory; but it is equally difficult to prove that she did *not*!
- (a) But if she indeed did happen to be so blessed, it is easy for me to see how some of this "borrowing" might, all unconsciously, have found its way into her manuscripts.

C. "How:" A More Important Issue Than "What"?

1. Dr. Ron Graybill, in discoursing upon EGW's literary borrowing, has often pointed out that: *How* she borrowed may well be a more important consideration than *what* she borrowed--though the critics have been almost universally silent upon *that* question! And he proposes these significant avenues of research:
 - a. How did she use that which she borrowed? How did she often adapt--or even change--much of what she borrowed?
 - b. How did she know *what* to borrow, and what to leave *unborrowed*?
 - c. How did she *go beyond* the material she borrowed from other authors, to add new information not found elsewhere--even in the Bible?
 - d. And what was the role of the Holy Spirit in the entire literary operation, involving as it did principles of divine inspiration and revelation?

2. Because in much of her literary borrowing, EGW would turn a phrase to suit her own personal ends, not the ends of the original author. (And this is an important facet in the application of the legal literary doctrine of "fair use," by the way.)

- a. For sometimes she would borrow only a part of a sentence, turning the remainder 180-degrees in the opposite direction.

(1) For example, in his book, *Origin and History of the Books of the Bible*, Calvin E. Stowe wrote:

(a) It is not the words of the Bible that were inspired; *it is not the thoughts of the Bible that were inspired*; it is the men who wrote the Bible that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words, *not on the man's thoughts*, but on the man himself; so that he, by *his own spontaneity*, under the impulse of the Holy Ghost, *conceives* certain thoughts.--p. 20; emphasis supplied.

(3) Now, please notice how Mrs. White agreed with--and copied--a *portion* of Stowe's statement; but how she changed another part of it 180 degrees, because Stowe's original statement actually contained error. *She* modified it:

(a) It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions, but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit is *imbued* with thoughts.--1SM 21; emphasis supplied.

D. Helpful Insights From Various Writers—Inside and Outside of the Church

1. SDA Seminary Professor Edward Heppenstall [1901-94]:

- a. In "The Inspired Witness of Ellen White" (Adventist Review, May 8, 1987, p. 17, Dr. Heppenstall concluded his article:

Use of Other Sources

Does her inclusion of material from other Christian sources, often without giving credit, call into question Ellen White's claim to inspiration and genuineness as a messenger of the Lord?

Ellen White sought to deceive no one. Thoughts, facts, and truths written by one person may be used by another without plagiarism. She made original applications of older material, while furnishing herself with thoughts and words of other books. She can hardly be reproached as a plagiarist, any more than the architect or sculptor can be censured as a copier of Christopher Wren or Michelangelo

because he digs his marble from the same quarry, squares his stones by the same art, and unites them in columns of the same order. The freedom to adopt and adapt from the common property of scholars the world over. To use the arguments and follow the truths of other writers is by no means incompatible with originality. In fact, absolute originality is almost impossible.

No valid objection can be brought against Ellen White when she enlarges and clarifies her own ideas in the light of other men's works. To establish the charge of plagiarism, one must prove a deliberate attempt to use another's work to exalt oneself rather than the glory of God. Her whole purpose was the communication of truth, believing that whatever the source, the truth must be exalted and God glorified.

As finite beings, the full knowledge of what is involved in God's method of communication can easily escape us. God chose Ellen White and spoke to

and through her in a way that He does not speak to us. Belief in all such supernatural communication of God's truth requires faith on our part.

Love "thinketh no evil." There is too much denigration of the church and its doctrines; too much disapproval and rejection among us because others do not think exactly as we do.

The issue is this: Is her witness to Jesus and to the Scriptures true? Is her claim to have received communications from God genuine? Let us be persuaded that God has spoken and still is speaking to us; that the truths we hold came from God Himself; and that they will lead us to triumph and life everlasting through our Lord Jesus Christ. □

2. Syndicated Columnist James J. Kilpatrick, Jr.:

- a. Earlier, we suggested the possibility that one explanation for EGW's literary borrowing was the exercise of a photographic memory--a writer reads something, it lays dormant for a time in the subconscious memory, only later to be resurrected, at the subconscious--or even unconscious--level.
 - b. In 1987, James J. Kilpatrick, Jr., wrote a column, published in the Washington, (DC) *Post*, in which he relates an experience that was equally embarrassing and revealing:
 - (1) He had--years before--read something in one of Mark Twain's books, and then it had slipped from his conscious memory.
 - (2) After the passage of time, while one day writing one of his regular columns, this item had surfaced, and sneaked right into this essay.
 - (3) He thought this new piece to be his own composition--and a cleverly-contrived one at that.
 - (4) But a reader wrote to him, to chastise him for using something from Mark Twain, and claiming it as his own.
 - (4) Which experience, in turn, was grist for yet another column: "I, Too, Have Committed Plagiarism," published in one of America's leading daily newspapers, on Oct. 11, 1987--quite possibly a mirror-image of that which happened (possibly repeatedly) in the experience of Ellen White.
- (a) (For the complete text, see **Appendix G.**)

3. Amherst College President Heman Humphrey:

- a. When John Harris wrote his memorable biography of Jesus, *The Great Teacher*, which was subsequently published in 1835 (when EGW was but eight years of age), he asked his friend, Amherst College President Heman Humphrey, to write the Preface.
- b. The book became widely acclaimed; and, in adult years, it came to the attention of EGW, who not only personally treasured it, but also incorporated portions of it into her own work on Christ, *The Desire of Ages*.
- c. In his Preface, Humphrey hypothesized about what might well be the plight should a truly authentic, genuine prophet arise in modern times--when just about everything that could be said upon a given subject had already been written by some other author. Just what, he mused, would be the role of this new prophet?
- d. In the light of what, subsequently, was, indeed, about to happen, Humphrey's piece today appears almost prescient!
- e. And the parallel with the experience of EGW is nothing less than stunning!
Wrote Humphrey:
 - (1) Suppose, for example, an inspired prophet were now to appear in the church, to add a supplement to the canonical books--what a Babel of opinions would he find on almost every theological subject! And how highly probable it is that his ministry would consist, or seem to consist, in a mere selection and ratification of such of these opinions as accorded with the mind of God. Absolute originality would seem to be almost impossible. The inventive mind of man has already bodied forth speculative opinions in almost every conceivable form, forestalling and robbing the future of its fair proportion of novelties, and leaving little more,--even to a divine messenger,--than the office of taking some of these opinions and impressing them with the seal of heaven.--Cited by Arthur L White in 4Bio 63.

Conclusion

1. Well, in the words of Solomon, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter!"
2. It is, first of all, vitally necessary that we properly make the important, valid distinction between:
 - a. "**Plagiarism**"--that morally reprehensible, deliberately-intentionally, and legally unauthorized appropriation by one writer of the words of another--with the intent to pass them off as one's own words, literary embezzlement, if you please, on the one hand, and

- b. **"Literary borrowing"** on the other hand--the totally-legitimate use by one writer of another's words or ideas, for the second writer's own particular literary ends.
3. Originality of composition cannot be a Biblical test of a true prophet, because so many of the Bible writers themselves engaged in literary borrowing to an almost staggering, unbelievable degree, from the first book to the last.
 - a. Thus, EGW's use of the same literary practice is clearly in harmony with this respected tradition and legitimate precedent.
4. After her writings were examined in 1981 by a specialist in copyright law, who--after 300 hours of research, in more than 1,000 cases in American literary law (1790-1915)--concluded that she was well within the established boundaries of the legal doctrine of "fair use."
 - a. And if she (or her Estate, today) were ever to be haled into court to be tried on charges of plagiarism, Attorney Vincent Ramik said that he would volunteer to defend her, because the prosecution clearly would have "no case."
 - b. In EGW's lifetime she was never sued in a court of law--nor even threatened with such a suit--by any author or publisher suspecting literary piracy or copyright infringement (the two legal issues in plagiarism), nor has her Estate been thus threatened since her passing in 1915.
5. Not only did Ellen White never steal the writings of others, she never lied about her practices, whether in her written or oral communications with her church.
 - a. She never tried to hide her literary borrowing.
 - b. On the contrary, she repeatedly declared in print that she *had* utilized the writings of other authors--particularly citing in the categories of health, history, and theology.
 - c. And then she went still further to explain carefully *why* she had done this thing.
 - d. And critics have yet failed to produce one scintilla of evidence that church leadership--in her day or in ours--have ever engaged in a conspiracy of either silence or "cover-up" to hide the fact of this literary borrowing.
 - e. On the contrary, from earliest days, church officials consistently--and repeatedly--have gone out of their way to confront false allegations of plagiaristic wrongdoing, in an up-front manner, with extensively-detailed and documented explanations for all who cared to listen.
6. EGW was early told by her angel that precisely because of her limited formal educational background, the Holy Spirit would lead her to beautiful gems of thought, expressed in suitable language, that she might appropriately employ in conveying truths supernaturally revealed to her.
 - a. And, in the process, she was assured that the Holy Spirit would also guard her from perpetuating any error that might have accompanied such gems in their original literary context.

7. The credibility of the testimony of Fannie Bolton, who claimed to have written *Steps to Christ* and a number of other literary productions and testimonies which bore Ellen White's name, is seriously undercut by the fact that:
 - a. Fannie repeatedly confessed to falsification, subsequent to her accusations, upon some half-dozen different occasions.
 - b. She was twice committed to a state mental hospital, for a total period of 16-1/2 months, toward the end of her life (see **Appendix H**).
8. To understand adequately her practice of literary borrowing, one must first consider the four enumerated points of her philosophy of sacred composition.
 - a. Five reasons have been adduced as possible explanations for her literary borrowing.
 - b. But an even more important consideration is the issue of *how* she treated--and often changed--the materials that she *did* borrow (as well as *why* she didn't borrow other materials readily available at hand), to accomplish her own literary ends.
9. With Peter, we today "have not followed cunningly devised fables."
 - a. And, with Peter--*we*, too, "have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:16, 19).
 - b. It is as true today as it was in Old Testament time, that if you "believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chron. 20:20).

List of Appendixes

- Appendix A:** Examples of Literary Borrowing in the Bible.
Appendix B: Various Renderings of Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10 in Contemporary Translations.
Appendix C: Ellen G. White and the Issue of Appropriate Skirt Length.
Appendix D: Ellen G. White's Use of Writings of Contemporary Health Reformers.
Appendix E: James White's Overstatements Concerning His Wife's Literary Borrowing.
Appendix F: Ellen G. White's Philosophy of Sacred Composition.
Appendix G: James J. Kilpatrick, Jr.'s Newspaper Column on Plagiarism.
Appendix H: The Credibility of the Fannie Bolton Testimony

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Appendix A

Examples of Literary Borrowing in the Bible

Source: Robert W. Olson, "The Literary Borrowing Issue," unpublished monograph, Feb. 8, 1989, pp. 1-3.

2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21 - All scripture written under the guidance (direction, supervision) of the Holy Spirit. However, not everything they wrote had its origin in a divine revelation. The prophets received their information in various ways. At times the Holy Spirit led them to use other sources.

Examples:

1. From other scripture writers

- (a) Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3
- (b) Isa. 36-39; 2 Kings 18-20
- (c) 95 percent of Mark is reproduced in Matthew or Luke

2. Moses and the Code of Hammurabi

The code of Hammurabi No. 14 says, "If a citizen has stolen the son of a citizen he shall be put to death." In similar vein Moses wrote, "And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 21:16). The code of Hammurabi No. 196 and No. 200 read, "If a citizen destroys the eye of the son of a citizen his eye shall be destroyed. . . . If a citizen knocks out a tooth of a citizen his tooth shall be knocked out." Two and a half centuries later Moses wrote, "Life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deut. 19:21). Inhumane laws were not included, so Moses was not just copying. (See 1BC 616-619.)

3. Eccl. 12:9, 10

"In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly."--New American Standard Bible.

4. Luke 1:1-4

"Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught."--New American Standard Bible.

"It appears indubitable from Luke 1:1-3 and from the verbal parallels in the Synoptic Gospels that Matthew and Luke, at least, were led by the Holy Spirit to use previously written documents in the preparation of their Gospels. . . . Similarities in the material common to Matthew and Luke, but not found in Mark, indicate that they drew upon another common source, or sources, besides Mark."--5BC 178-179.

5. Epimenides, 6th Century B.C.

"They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one--The Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies! But thou art not dead: thou livest and abidest for ever; for in thee we live and move and have our being."--Quoted in 6BC 354. (cf. Titus 1:12; Acts 17:28.)

6. Jesus used language others had used earlier

Christ gave us the golden rule (Matthew 7:12), but Rabbi Hillel, a generation earlier had already written, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor; that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof" (quoted in 5BC 356). The thought and even some of the words in the Lord's prayer may be found in earlier Jewish ritual prayers known as Ha-Kaddish (see 5BC 346).

7. The Book of Enoch, First Century B.C.

"And I saw . . . and behold a star fell from heaven."--Enoch 86:1 (cf. Rev. 9:1).

"They were all judged and found guilty and cast into this fiery abyss."--Enoch 90:26 (cf. Rev. 20:15).

"And the first heaven shall depart and pass away, and a new heaven shall appear."--Enoch 91:16 (cf. Rev. 21:1).

"The horse shall walk up to the breast in the blood of sinners."--Enoch 100:3 (cf. Rev. 14:20).

"Their names shall be blotted out of the book of life."--Enoch 108:3 (cf. Rev. 3:5).

"After that I saw . . . a multitude beyond number and reckoning, who stood by the Lord of Spirits."--Enoch 40:1 (cf. Rev. 7:9).

"The Lord of Spirits has caused His light to appear on the face of the holy, righteous and elect."--Enoch 38:4 (cf. 2 Cor. 4:6).

"The Son of Man . . . who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden."--Enoch 46:3 (cf. Col. 2:3).

"Then shall pain come upon them as on a woman in travail."--Enoch 62:4 (cf. 1 Thess. 5:3).

"All things are naked and open in Thy sight, and Thou seest all things, and nothing can hide itself from Thee."--Enoch 9:5 (cf. Heb. 4:13).

"The colour of his body is whiter than snow . . . and the hair of his head is whiter than white wool, and his eyes are like the rays of the sun."--Enoch 106:10 (cf. Rev. 1:4).

Appendix B

Various Renderings of Ecclesiastes 12:9, 10, in Contemporary Translations

KJV

9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and *that which* was written was upright, *even* words of truth.

AMP

9 And further, because the Preacher was wise, he [Solomon] still taught the people knowledge; and he pondered and sought out *and* set in order many proverbs.

10 The Preacher sought out acceptable words, and to write down rightly words of truth *or* correct sentiment.

RSV

9 Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging proverbs with great care. 10 The Preacher sought to find pleasing words, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.

NIV

9 Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. 10 The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

Purpose of the Preacher

NASB

9 In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs.

10 The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly.

JERUSALEM

Besides being a sage, Qoheleth also taught his knowledge to the people, 9 having weighed, studied and amended a great many proverbs. •Qoheleth tried 10 to write in an attractive style and to set down truthful thoughts in a straightforward manner.

Appendix C

Ellen G. White and the Issue of Appropriate Skirt Length

Source: Ellen G. White, "Questions and Answers: Question Number Two," *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 8, 1867, p. 260.

QUESTION NUMBER TWO.

Does not the practice of the sisters in wearing their dresses nine inches from the floor contradict Testimony No. 11, which says they should reach somewhat below the top of a lady's gaiter boot? Does it not also contradict Testimony No. 10, which says they should clear the filth of the street an inch or two without being raised by the hand?

ANSWER.

The proper distance from the bottom of the dress to the floor was not given to me in inches. Neither was I shown ladies' gaiter boots; but three companies of females passed before me, with their dresses as follows with respect to length:

The first were of fashionable length, burdening the limbs, impeding the step, and sweeping the street and gathering its filth; the evil results of which I have fully stated. This class, who were slaves to fashion, appeared feeble and languid.

The dress of the second class which passed before me was in many respects as it should be. The limbs were well clad. They were free from the burdens which the tyrant, Fashion, had imposed upon the first class; but had gone to that extreme in the short dress as to disgust and prejudice good people, and destroy in a great measure their own influence. This is the style and influence of the "American Costume," taught and worn by many at "Our Home," Danville, N. Y. It does not reach to the knee. I need not say that this style of dress was shown me to be too short.

A third class passed before me with cheerful countenances, and free, elastic step. Their dress was the length I have described as proper, modest and healthful. It cleared the filth of the street and side-walk a few inches under all circumstances, such as ascending and descending steps, &c.

As I have before stated, the length was not given me in inches, and I was not shown a lady's boot. And here I would state that although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation. As I wrote upon the subject of dress the view of those three companies revived in my mind as plain as when I was viewing them in vision; but I was left to describe the length of the proper dress in my own language the best I could, which I have done by stating that the bottom of the dress should reach near the top of a lady's boot, which would be necessary in order to clear the filth of the streets under the circumstances before named.

I put on the dress, in length as near as I had seen and described as I could judge. My sisters in Northern Michigan also adopted it. And when the subject of inches came up in order to secure uniformity as to length everywhere, a rule was brought and it was found that the length of our dresses ranged from eight to ten inches from the floor. Some of these were a little longer than the sample shown me, while others were a little shorter.

Numerous letters came to me from all parts of the field, inquiring the length of the dress shown me. Having seen the rule applied to the distance from the floor of several dresses, and having become fully satisfied that nine inches comes the nearest to the samples shown me, I have given this number of inches in No. 12, as the proper length in regard to which uniformity is very desirable. If it be said that a lady's boot is not nine inches high, I would say I wear a boot eight inches high, and when I have walked before my sisters with it uncovered as those properly dressed passed before me in vision, they could not see the top of my boot.

Appendix D

Ellen G. White's Use of Writings of Contemporary Health Reformers

Source: Ellen G. White, "Questions and Answers: Question Number One,"
Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald, October 8, 1867, p. 260.

QUESTION NUMBER ONE.

Did you receive your views upon health reform before visiting the Health Institute at Dansville, N. Y., or before you had read works on the subject?

ANSWER.

[It was at the house of Bro. A. Hilliard, at Otsego, Mich., June 6, 1863, that the great subject of Health Reform was opened before me in vision.] I did not visit Dansville till August, 1864, fourteen months after I had the view. I did not read any works upon health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts*, Vols. iii and iv, *Appeal to Mothers*, and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of "How to Live." I did not know that such a paper existed as the Laws of Life, published at Dansville, N. Y. I had not heard of the several works upon health, written by Dr. J. C. Jackson, and other publications at Dansville, at the time I had the view named above. I did not know that such works existed until September, 1868, when in Boston, Mass., my husband saw them advertised in a periodical called the Voice of the Prophets, published by Eld. J. V. Himes. My husband ordered the works from Dansville and received them at Topsham, Maine. His business gave him no time to pe-

ruse them, and as I determined not to read them until I had written out my views, the books remained in their wrappers. [As I introduced the subject of health to friends where I labored in Michigan, New England, and in the State of New York, [and spoke against drugs and flesh meats, and in favor of water, pure air, and a proper diet, the reply was often made, "You speak very nearly the opinions taught in the Laws of Life, and other publications, by Drs. 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.] [And 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.

Appendix E

James White's Overstatements Concerning His Wife's Literary Borrowing

Source: James White, *Life Sketches. Ancestry, Early Life, Christian Experience, and Extensive Labors of Elder James White and His Wife, Mrs. Ellen G. White.* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1980, [1st ed.], pp. 328, 329

3. Does unbelief suggest that what she writes in her personal testimonies has been learned from others? We inquire, What time has she had to learn all these facts? and who for a moment can regard her as a Christian woman, if she gives her ear to gossip, then writes it out as a vision from God? And where is the person of superior natural and acquired abilities who could listen to the description of one, two, or three thousand cases, all differing, and then write them out without getting them confused, laying the whole work liable to a thousand contradictions? If Mrs. W. has gathered the facts from a human mind in a single case, she has in thousands of cases, and God has not shown her these things which she has written in these personal testimonies.

4. In her published works there are many things set forth which cannot be found in other books, and yet they are so clear and beautiful that the unprejudiced mind grasps them at once as truth. A doctor of divinity once heard Mrs. W. speak upon her favorite theme, God in Nature. She dwelt largely upon the life and teachings of Christ. This Christian gentleman was instructed and highly edified; and at the close of the discourse, in private conversation, addressed her in these words: "Sister White, while you were speaking, I have been asking myself the question, Why is it that none of us have thought of these precious things which you have brought out this morning?"

If commentators and theological writers generally had seen these gems of thought which strike the mind so forcibly, and had they been brought out in print, all the ministers in the land could have read them. These men gather thoughts from books, and as Mrs. W. has written and spoken a hundred things, as truthful as they are beautiful and harmonious, which cannot be found in the writings of

others, they are new to the most intelligent readers and hearers. And if they are not to be found in print, and are not brought out in sermons from the pulpit, where did Mrs. W. find them? From what source has she received the new and rich thoughts which are to be found in her writings and oral addresses? She could not have learned them from books, from the fact that they do not contain such thoughts. And, certainly, she did not learn them from those ministers who had not thought of them. The case is a clear one. It evidently requires a hundred times the credulity to believe that Mrs. W. has learned these things of others, and has palmed them off as visions from God, that it does to believe that the Spirit of God has revealed them to her.

5. The spirit of prophecy has been appealing to the church through Mrs. W. during the past thirty-five years in behalf of the Bible, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, setting forth practical godliness as the test of Christian character. The fruits of her teachings and labors have been good, and only good. Here is the Lord's test:—

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Matt. 7: 16, 17.

Gamaliel, a reputable doctor of the law, said, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Acts 5: 38, 39.

The subject under consideration seems to demand that the scriptural evidences of the perpetuity of spiritual gifts, and their design, should constitute a chapter of this work.

Appendix F

Ellen G. White's Philosophy of Sacred Composition: Subsumed in Four Propositions

Source: Roger W. Coon, "Notes on the 'Plagiarism' Issue, February 1, 1994, pp. 10, 11, as subsequently revised, and with acknowledgment of the research of Dr. Ron Graybill.

1. **There is no basis for human preeminence, because—ultimately—there is nothing totally original in this world.**
 - a. Solomon's words are as true in the realm of ideas as in any other: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and *there is no new thing under the sun*" (Eccl. 1:9; emphasis supplied).
 - (1) Ideas resurface in every new generation; and that which may be thought by some to be original, may, in reality, be only a restatement of an ancient truth.
2. **Christ was the Originating Creator of all true ideas:**
 - a. Ellen White wrote in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 464:4-465:0:
 - (1) "The world has had its great teachers, men of giant intellect and wonderful research, men whose utterances have stimulated thought, and opened to view vast fields of knowledge; and these men have been honored as guides and benefactors of their race. But there is One who stands higher than they. [John 1:12, 18 quoted.] We can trace the line of the world's great teachers as far back as human records extend; but the Light [Christ] was before them. As the moon and the stars of the solar system shine by the reflected light of the sun, so, as far as their teaching is true, do the world's great thinkers reflect the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Every gem of thought, every flash of the intellect, is from the Light of the world."
 - b. A similar thought is expressed by EGW in Ms 25, Jan. 7-9, 1890, p. 5 (13MR 241, 242):
 - (1) "In His discourses Christ...did not disdain the repetition of old and familiar truths...if they would serve His purpose to inculcate ideas.
"Christ was the Originator of all the ancient gems of truth. Through the work of the enemy these truths had been displaced. They had been disconnected from their true position, and placed in the framework of error. Christ's work was to readjust and establish the precious gems in the framework of truth.... Christ rescued them from the rubbish of error, and gave them a new, vital force.... Christ Himself could use any of these old truths without borrowing the slightest particle for He had originated them all. He had cast them in the minds and thoughts of each generation, and when He came to our world, He rearranged and vitalized the truths which had become dead, making them more forcible for the benefit of future generations. It was Jesus Christ who had the power of rescuing the truths from the rubbish, and again giving them to the world with more than their

original freshness and power.”

- c. Three years later Mrs. White published a variant of the above statement in her article, “Christ as Teacher,” in the Review and Herald of Nov. 28, 1893, par. 3:
 - (1) “Jesus did not disdain to repeat old, familiar truths; for He was the Author of these truths.... Truths which had been lost sight of, which had been misplaced, misinterpreted, and disconnected from their true position, He separated from the companionship of error; and showing them as precious jewels in their own bright luster, He reset them in their proper framework, and commanded them to stand fast forever.... The work of Christ was to give again to the world the truth in its original freshness and beauty.”

3. Because Christ is the *Originator* of all true ideas, He is also the *Owner* of them.

- a. In the Parable of the Hiring-Householder, Christ has the owner of the farm saying: “Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own?” (Matt. 20:15).
 - (1) Christ declares that He is at perfect liberty to determine by what process He will communicate truth: how, when, and by whom.
- b. In Letter 7, Feb. 6, 1894, EGW wrote to Fannie Bolton, one of her literary assistants (who was then inordinately concerned about receiving proper credit and recognition for her own editorial/literary endeavors on behalf of EGW, especially in connection with the production of Steps to Christ):
 - (1) “An illustration was given me of a tree full of beautiful fruit. I was shown Fannie gathering the fruit, some ripe, the best, some unripe. She put it in her apron, and said, ‘This is mine, it is mine.’ I said, ‘Fannie, you are certainly claiming that which is not yours. That fruit belongs to the tree. Anyone may pluck and enjoy it, but it belongs to that tree.’”

4. EGW envisaged herself, ultimately, as the special agent, chosen by God, to convey ancient truths to her generation (and ours); and it is *this truth—not the vehicle in which it is carried—that is the only truly important issue.*

- a. In Letter 53, April 5, 1900, Mrs. White wrote to Stephen N. Haskell:
 - (1) In regard to our brethren writing on the third angel’s message: Let them write. Bear in mind that in the branches of the vine there is diversity in unity. Life in nature objects to uniformity. There is variety in the human body, from the eyes to the feet.... There is an unseen, conscious, individual unity, keeping the body machinery in action, each part working in harmony with every other.

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

“Let all be under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, one may use the same expressions used by a fellow-worker under the same guidance. He should not make an effort to do this, or not to do it, but leave the mind to be acted upon by the Holy Spirit. There is one thing all should do: ‘Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ [Eph. 4:3]....

“The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction.”

For an excellent summation of Ellen G. White's Philosophy of Sacred Composition, see her: "Christ Revealed in the Father," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Jan. 7, 1890, p.1, pars.8-10:

Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles spoke as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and they plainly stated that they spoke not by their own power, nor in their own name. They desired that no credit might be ascribed to them, that no one might regard them as the originators of anything whereof they might glory. They were jealous for the honor of God, to whom all praise belongs. They declared that their ability and the messages they brought, were given them as delegates of the power of God. God was their authority and sufficiency. Jesus had imparted a knowledge of God to patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. The revelations of the Old Testament were emphatically the unfoldings of the gospel, the unveiling of the purpose and will of the infinite Father: Through the holy men of old, Christ labored for the salvation of fallen humanity. And when he came to the world it was with the same message of redemption from sin, and restoration to the favor of God.

Christ is the Author of all truth. Every brilliant conception, every thought of wisdom, every capacity and talent of men, is the gift of Christ. He borrowed no new ideas from humanity; for he originated all. But when he came to earth, he found the bright gems of truth which he had intrusted to man, all buried up in superstition and tradition. Truths of most vital importance were placed in the frame-work of error, to serve the purpose of the arch-deceiver. The opinions of men, the most popular sentiments of the people, were glossed over with the appearance of truth, and were presented as the genuine gems of heaven, worthy attention and reverence. But Christ swept away erroneous theories of every grade. No one save the world's Redeemer had power to present the truth in its primitive purity, divested of the error that Satan had accumulated to hide its heavenly beauty.

Some of the truths that Christ spoke were familiar to the people. They had heard them from the lips of priests and rulers, and from men of thought; but for all that, they were distinctively the thoughts of Christ. He had given them to men in trust, to be communicated to the world. On every occasion he proclaimed the particular truth he thought appropriate for the needs of his hearers, whether the ideas had been expressed before or not.

Appendix G

Source: James J. Kilpatrick, Jr., "I, Too, Have Committed Plagiarism,"
The Washington Post, October 11, 1987.

'I Too Have Committed Plagiarism'

The tribulations of Delaware's Sen. Joe Biden bring to mind an occasion of personal pain. The first of several charges that forced the gentleman out of the presidential race was that he had engaged in plagiarism. Among other things, he had borrowed some good lines from other politicians, and he had paid no interest on the loans. The incidents appeared to be patent plagiarism, and that was the beginning of Biden's end.

Let me make a confession. It is a confession I have made publicly before, but the Biden story gives it fresh currency. I too have committed plagiarism.

It happened in this fashion. Three or four years ago—I forget when—I wrote a column that touched lightly upon the German language. I cannot find the column, but I said something to this effect—that when a German dives into a sentence, that is the last you will see of him until he emerges at the end of his sentence with the verb in his teeth. Cross my heart, when I wrote that line I honestly and truly believed it to be my very own.

You may therefore understand my shock, chagrin, embarrassment and horror when a gentlewoman in New England wrote me a reproachful letter. She pointed out that in "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," Mark Twain had preceded me. Twain had written:

"When the literary German dives into a sentence, that is the last you are going to see of him until he emerges on the other side of his Atlantic with his verb in his mouth."

I was struck dumb—and for good reason: I had never in my life read "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court." To this day I have not read it. The work is not in my library. Yet any jury in the world, comparing the two passages, would find me guilty of grand larceny. I would have apologized to Twain, but he was long since dead. My only recourse was to make

public confession and to try to put the matter out of mind. A writer never could put such a matter out of mind.

A couple of years passed. Then a gentleman in Seattle wrote me a kindly letter. He recalled a chapter in Twain's autobiography in which Twain himself confessed to an almost identical experience. It is a pity to compress Twain's delightful account of the incident, but let me try.

Twain had published "The Innocents Abroad" in 1869. Three years later an old friend put a hard question to him: "How did you come to steal Oliver Wendell Holmes' dedication and put it in your book?" Twain couldn't believe it. Alas, it was true. Holmes had published a small book of poems, and there on the dedication page was the precise passage Twain had put forward as his own. He could not remember ever having seen the Holmes book.

Then it came to him. Many years earlier, in Hawaii, Twain had spent two bedridden weeks in a Honolulu hotel recovering from a painful case of saddle boils. He found nothing in his hotel room to read but . . . a little volume of poems by Oliver Wendell Holmes. He read the book to rags, "without thought or intention of preserving it in memory," but somehow the dedication stuck in his mind. He was guilty.

Twain wrote to Holmes and told him "the whole disgraceful affair." He begged for forgiveness and implored him to believe the crime was unintentional. Holmes responded with a letter that Twain cherished.

"In it Doctor Holmes laughed the kindest and healingest laugh over the whole matter . . . and assured me that there was no crime in unconscious plagiarism; that I committed it every day, that he committed it every day, that every man alive on the earth who writes or speaks commits it every day and not merely once or twice but every time he opens his mouth; that all our phrasings are spiritualized shadows

cast multitudinously from our readings; that no happy phrase of ours is ever quite original with us; there is nothing of our own in it except some slight change born of our temperament, character, environment, teachings and associations; that this slight change differentiates it from another man's manner of saying it, stamps it with our special style and makes it our own for the time being . . ."

I continue to wonder where I first saw Twain's line about the German sentence. A friend has suggested that perhaps I stumbled over it once in browsing through Bartlett's Quotations, found the line felicitous and tucked it away in a dusty attic of the mind. Perhaps. I would like to believe that I got it from a beautiful German girl at the University of Missouri 50 years ago, but that is another story involving another confession, and prudently I leave it for another day.

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Appendix H

The Credibility of the "Fannie" Bolton Testimony

Much stock has been placed by the critics of Ellen White in certain accusations made by one of her former literary assistants, Miss Frances E. ("Fannie") Bolton. Serious questions, however, have arisen concerning the veracity of her personal testimony, and the degree of credibility which reasonably may be placed upon it, in view of (1) several "confessions" and retractions made subsequent to her complaints; (2) her emotional and mental state during the latter part of her life; and (3) two lengthy confinements in the Kalamazoo [Michigan] State Hospital (1911-12 and 1924-25), which total 16-1/2 months. (There seems also to be a history of insanity in her family, involving at least her father.)

Background: Fannie Bolton was born August 1, 1859, and was a writer of more than average talent. Her compositions included poetry, at least one religious song ("Not I, But Christ," for which she wrote both words and music), and prose reports of an Illinois camp meeting for secular newspapers (which work first brought her to the attention of Ellen White. The two ladies first met in 1887 (when Fannie was 28, and Ellen was 60), at which time she became one of Mrs. White's corps of literary assistants. Despite early evidence of emotional instability and spiritual immaturity, Fannie traveled with Mrs. White's entourage to Australia in 1891. There she later succumbed to injured feelings, made personal complaints about her relationship with Mrs. White, made certain literary accusations against her employer, and continued in an up-and-down experience in this employment until her health failed (in May, 1896), at which time she permanently parted company with Mrs. White and returned to the United States.

Documentary Sources: The most complete resource in attempting to get to the bottom of the Fannie Bolton/Ellen White controversy is Dr. Ronald D. Graybill's extremely-helpful 122-page *The Fannie Bolton Story: A Collection of Source Documents* (Ellen G. White Estate, April, 1981), which contains—in chronological sequence—all documents in verbatim form relating to Miss Bolton today extant in the voluminous White Estate archives.

The Problem: There is documentary evidence that Ellen White, fairly early in her relationship with Fannie Bolton, detected emotional and mental instability, as well as spiritual immaturity, in the character of her new employee. Later Fannie's chief complaints (voiced generally privately, but which quickly became public) were to the effect that the literary assistants who worked on the manuscript-drafts from Mrs. White's pen were not sufficiently recognized publicly and prominently for their literary contribution to the enterprise. In particular, Fannie claimed that she had written outright much of *Steps to Christ*, as well as several other of Ellen White's literary works, instead of serving merely in the capacity of an editorial literary assistant.

Her allegations, of course, provided substantial aid-and-comfort to certain critics of Mrs. White, who used Fannie's allegations as the ultimate "proof" that Ellen White was not the "real" author of many of the books which bore her name.

Of course these critics (quite understandably) never bother to mention Fannie's subsequent (and repeated) written (1) "confessions," retractions, profuse apologies, and requests for

reinstatement in employment which often followed (at least five times, by December 9, 1895, when EGW wrote Letter 123a, 1895, to her son James Edson White) in the wake of these allegations; (2) Fannie's own personal references to her "intense headaches" (Graybill, p. 13; see also p. 39); nor (3) Fannie's own statement on the true nature of the work performed by Mrs. White's literary assistants, and how things *really* operated in that office (on November 11, 1894, July 5, 1897, and "A Confession Concerning the Testimony of Jesus Christ to "Dear Brethren in the Truth," written in early 1901 (cited by Arthur L. White, *The Australian Years*, pp., 248-50).

Treatment for Mental Illness: That this "pattern of falsification and subsequent confession," as Arthur White aptly characterized it (*ibid.*, p. 250), may have been at least partially the product of a breakdown in mental health is reinforced by the documented testimony of E. A. Morter, M.D., Medical Superintendent of the Kalamazoo [Michigan] State Hospital, to the effect that Fannie Bolton was "committed" to his institution for the mentally ill between February 20, 1911 and March 18, 1912, and again between October 9, 1924 and Jan. 21, 1925 (Graybill, p. 122). There is also some evidence that Fannie's father, a Methodist minister, was insane before his death (Graybill, p. 116, 117).

Death: Fannie Bolton died at the age of 66 years at Battle Creek on June 28, 1926, one year and five months following her second hospitalization for mental illness, and she was interred at Eureka, Michigan. A report of her funeral service appeared in an obituary column in the *Review and Herald*, August 5, 1926, p. 22. And one can only hope that the report of Mrs. R. C. Porter ("the peaceful expression on her face told us she felt ready to meet her Master") was an accurate statement of reality.

Evaluation of Fannie Bolton's Testimony: In view of all of the foregoing, it seems difficult to accept as credible the veracity of Fannie Bolton's accusations against Ellen White, in view of (1) her own repeated public confessions to the contrary, and (2) her demonstrated--and extended--treatment for mental illness