

## XVIII SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The investigation of Ellen White's use of literary sources in writing The Desire of Ages has proven to be a long and involved study. As it is we have reviewed only 15 of the 87 chapters or about 17 percent of the full text. Our coverage, however, has been thorough and the text of the chapters analyzed represents a random sample. On these grounds, assuming our summary and conclusions represent the findings faithfully, our generalizations about the work as a whole should be quite valid.

This final chapter of the research report will consist of two major divisions, as the title suggests. Each section will be presented as an independent unit though obviously they will be related. In the summary we will attempt to pull together the separate summaries of the 15 chapters into a general summary statement. The same 14 questions treated in each of the 15 chapter summaries will provide the format for this final summary. The second part of the chapter will utilize the information provided by the summary to answer the general questions to which this investigation has pointed from the beginning. The primary concern of this research has been to discover the nature and extent of Ellen White's use of sources and secretaries in her writing on the life of Christ, particularly in the writing of The Desire of Ages.

The project advisors have warned me that many will not read the full text of this report, particularly the research

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data and the analyses. Many, I am told, will not take the time to read the introduction to the research. Those who do look at the report, apart from those whose questions and interest led the church to sponsor the research project, will no doubt be satisfied to look at the summary and conclusions. If these expectations are realistic for a study of this nature, length, and complexity, then we should present a rather complete statement even if in so doing we must repeat some matters treated in the introduction. This I have attempted to do, including only as much material from the introduction as seems necessary for clarification purposes. During the years I have been conducting this study I have met many who have questioned the wisdom of undertaking such a project. Some were not sure the research was necessary. Usually these knew little about its nature and objectives. Others felt that a study of sources was inappropriate for inspired writings. I would surely hope that all who read the conclusions will be clear on the questions to which the conclusions speak. No study attempts to answer all issues; no one should expect this research to answer his/her questions. The best one may expect is that such an investigation address its own questions honestly and fairly. We sincerely invite the reader to evaluate our conclusions on these terms. But before summarizing the results of the research and stating our conclusions, let us first explain how the basic research questions were generated.

## Summary and Conclusions

The special nature of Ellen White's writing methods and the particular purpose for writing The Desire of Ages made it necessary to raise questions about earlier writings and the use of literary assistants.

The Desire of Ages was originally planned as a revision of Ellen White's earlier comments on the life of Christ as found in The Spirit of Prophecy, Volumes II and III. The new work of the life of Christ was also to include the numerous writings on the life and ministry of Jesus which Ellen White had written for the various church journals. Ellen White's literary assistants were instructed to collect these earlier writings into an orderly compilation to which she would also be adding further commentary as needed to round out certain episodes in the life of Christ, or to add remarks on the teachings and events of Christ's life not included in the earlier accounts.<sup>1</sup>

The revisions and editing of earlier writings, the work of compiling these existing texts into an integrated new commentary on the life of Christ, and the development of new materials on the various episodes in the life and ministry of Jesus raise special questions about the work of these literary helpers, the role of Ellen White in the production of the DA text, and the use of literary sources.

Since the DA text includes both new materials and edited commentary from various older writings, our source

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<sup>1</sup>See Introduction Part B for full details on how The Desire of Ages was written.

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study had to be extended to these earlier diary entries, manuscripts, and journal articles. Obviously source parallels (parallels in sources) should be drawn from the writer's own work, hopefully from the writer's own handwritten text, if evaluations of an author's literary dependency are to be measured.

We did not make a thorough study of the full content of these earlier writings, but we did include in our analysis those materials written on the same topics as the DA chapters researched, even if in later editing the commentaries were not included in the finished DA text. We were seeking Ellen White's firsthand use of sources, not always observable in a later edited version.

Of course the fact that Marian Davis and others were very much involved in the production of the DA text raised the questions relative to the influence of these literary assistants on the text. Was there any evidence that they did the copying? To what extent did their editorial activities modify the writings of Ellen White? Additional questions were raised by the study of the text itself. Did the text agree with Scripture? Is Ellen White consistent in her commentary through the years, or does she change either position or emphasis as she continues to treat a given topic through the years? These and other matters entered the discussion as the textual evidence changed from chapter to chapter.

The 15 randomly selected chapters from The Desire of

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Ages vary in length, literary dependency, and use of earlier Ellen White writings. When literary criticism is extended over so wide an area and such varied extent of text the reviewer is often pulled in different directions at different stages of the analysis and by different characteristics of the text. The final analysis may be unduly influenced by such special features and to this degree distorted. A few distinctive features may have the effect of coloring one's view of the entire work. On the other hand in an attempt to avoid any such misrepresentation of the whole, one is tempted to overlook the more special elements of certain chapters and look for a common denominator shared by all the chapters. The effort to harmonize and smooth out the work so as to create a defensible generalization representative of the whole often washes out these atypical features. The net effect of such criticism is to create a unity or even a uniformity that exists only in the mind of the reviewer, surely not in the text.

To avoid either of these pitfalls we decided to develop questions to ask of each chapter, regardless of length and content. There was no time to research all 15 chapters, note their general character, then generate the most appropriate questions, given the content of the 15 selected chapters. Once the text evidence was presented, both that of Ellen White and that of her sources, we undertook a careful analysis of our findings. In so doing we kept the

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14 basic questions in mind, questions that would form the structure of the summary of each chapter. At the same time, however, rather than taking a rigid approach to the 14 guiding questions addressed to each chapter, we allowed the study to follow the course as determined by the particular character of the textual evidence. If problems or questions emerged for which we had no answers and/or which would lead us beyond the limited scope of this research project, we allowed these questions to be raised and we noted the problem for future researchers to solve.

Generally speaking, we are quite pleased with the 14 questions. The fact that not all 14 applied equally well to all 15 chapters forced us to open the analysis to other issues. By not coercing the text to fit one particular mold, we were made aware of the special features of certain chapters. The special content of certain chapters raises, for example, the question of Ellen White's use of the text of Scripture. At the end of each chapter summary of 14 questions we allowed room for presentation of special features or problems raised by the chapter. These items are not compiled in the summary for they differ from chapter to chapter. These questions which remain for future study will be held over for the second section of this chapter and introduced where they relate to the general concluding statements.

Another advantage of developing the 14 questions prior to the analysis of the 15 chapters lay in the resulting

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objectivity of the questions. We developed the questions from our desire for answers and not on the basis of the chapter's content. We did not limit questions to areas known to be common to the chapters under review. Whatever commonality of answers exists, it exists not by reason of the question but by reason of the content itself.

### GENERAL SUMMARY

Each of the 14 questions is presented in full before the summary statement is given for the evidence of all 15 chapters for that particular question. The summary statement is based upon the answers given under that question number for all 15 chapters. Since it is rather cumbersome for the reader to check the answer for each question through the entire research report, we have attempted to pull together in one chart the answers to each question provided by each chapter. On the following six pages we list each of the 14 questions and the answer we found in each of the 15 chapters. Two pages are given to the 14 questions as answered by 5 chapters. Obviously we have had to abbreviate our answers to accommodate the limited space. As the answers to each question are compiled and summarized in our comments below, the reader is invited to consult the chart for evidence and for locating the specific chapters where further evidence may be found on a given question or special feature of the text.

ANSWERS TO THE 14 SUMMARY QUESTIONS AS FOUND IN THE 15 CHAPTERS

Summary Questions	Chapter 3	Chapter 10	Chapter 13	Chapter 14	Chapter 24
1A. HW or CC <u>DA</u> Texts? <sup>1</sup>	Neither	Neither	Neither	Handwritten	Handwritten
1B. Pre- <u>DA</u> HW or CC Txts	Both	Both	Both	Both	Copy Text
2. Is <u>DA</u> Txt Expansion or Reduction?	Reduction	Neither	Inconclusive	Expansion	Expansion
3. How does <u>DA</u> Content Compare with Pre- <u>DA</u> ?	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same
4. How is <u>DA</u> Different from Pre- <u>DA</u> Txt?	Theme greatly enlarged	Christian aim not Adventist	Omits John's desert visit	John appears as new disciple	Did Jesus ask to read Bible?
5A. Dependent Sentences <u>DA</u>	59 of 130	35 of 231	8 of 127	100 of 250	32 of 153
5B. % of Chapt. Dependence	45%	15%	6%	40%	21%
6A. Independent <u>DA</u> Sent.	67 of 130	166 of 231	110 of 127	132 of 250	112 of 153
6B. % Chapt. Independence	52%	72%	87%	53%	73%
7A. Ave. Rate of Dependence for Dependent Sent.	2.3 for 59 S	2.89 for 35 S	2.1 for 8 S	3.12 for 100 S	2.8 for 32 S
7B. Ave. Rate of Dependence for all non-Bible Sent.	1.08 for 126 S	.50 for 201 S	.14 for 118 S	1.34 for 232 S	.63 for 144 S
8. Major <u>DA</u> Sources	Harris 44 S	None	None	Hanna 49 S Jones 44 S	Hanna 13 S March 15 S

1. The following abbreviations are used in this chart: HW = handwritten text(s); CC = corrected copy or copied text(s); DA = The Desire of Ages text; Txt = text(s); % = percent; Ave. = average; and S or Sent. = sentence(s).



ANSWERS TO THE 14 SUMMARY QUESTIONS AS FOUND IN THE 15 CHAPTERS - Page 2

Summary Questions	Chapter 3	Chapter 10	Chapter 13	Chapter 14	Chapter 24
9. Minor <u>DA</u> Sources	Kennedy 5 S Thayer 6 S Harris-Thayer- Kennedy in combination 4S	Fleetwood 10 S Geikie 9 S Hanna 8 S Jones 5 S Kitto 2 S Combination 1S	Hanna 8 S	Farrar 2 S Fleetwood 1 S Ingraham 2 S Melvill 2 S	March 4 S
10. Pre- <u>DA</u> Sources	Harris 100 S	Fleetwood 17 S Geikie 23 S Hanna 21 S Jones 3 S	Fleetwood 6S Hanna 28 S Harris 30 S Melvill 21 S Winslow 53 S	Jones 1 S Melvill 68 S	Hanna 9 S March 3 S March 37 S <sup>1</sup>
11. Is <u>DA</u> Text More or less Dependent than Pre- <u>DA</u> ?	Less	Less	No basis for comparison	Some Less	Some Less
12. How does <u>DA</u> Dependent Content Compare with Independent Content?	Same	Same	No basis for comparison	Same	Same
13A. Is <u>DA</u> Chapt. Thematic Structure Dependent on Literary Sources?	No	No	No	No	Yes
13B. Are <u>DA</u> Chapt. Sub-units Structurally Dependent?	Yes	No	No	Possibly, See Pre- <u>DA</u> text	Partly
14. Are Pre- <u>DA</u> txts dependent in structure?	Yes where content is same	Yes in <u>3SP</u>	Yes in some subsections	Yes in sub-units	Partly

1. March authored two books of a similar nature. The 3 sentences were from his Days of the Son of Man and the 37 sentences were parallels from his Walks and Homes of Jesus.

ANSWERS TO THE 14 SUMMARY QUESTIONS AS FOUND IN THE 15 CHAPTERS - Page 3

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Summary Questions	Chapter 37	Chapter 39	Chapter 46	Chapter 53	Chapter 56
1A. HW or CC <u>DA</u> Texts? <sup>1</sup>	Neither	Neither	Neither	Neither	Neither
1B. Pre- <u>DA</u> HW or CC Txts	Neither	Neither	Neither	Neither	Neither
2. Is <u>DA</u> Txt Expansion or Reduction?	Expansion	Reduction	Neither	Expansion	Inconclusive
3. How does <u>DA</u> Content Compare with Pre- <u>DA</u> ?	Different	Same	Different	Different	Different
4. How is <u>DA</u> Different from Pre- <u>DA</u> Txt?	Follows Mt.10 not general	Harmonizing of Gospels	Only Trans-figuration	Larger scope of Jesus' activity	Bible comment not homelife
5A. Dependent Sentences <u>DA</u>	59 of 217	39 of 158	38 of 89	26 of 193	1 of 97
5B. % of Chapt. Dependence	27%	25%	43%	13%	1%
6A. Independent <u>DA</u> Sent. <sup>1</sup>	146 of 217	107 of 158	48 of 89	142 of 193	96 of 97
6B. % Chapt. Independence <sup>1</sup>	67%	68%	54%	74%	99%
7A. Ave. Rate of Dependence for Dependent Sent.	3.2 for 59 S	3.4 for 39 S	3.7 for 38 S	3.31 for 26 S	1.0 for 1 S
7B. Ave. Rate of Dependence for all non-Bible Sent.	.92 for 205 S	.92 for 146 S	1.6 for 86 S	.51 for 168 S	.01 for 97 S
8. Major <u>DA</u> Sources	Hanna 29 S Harris 15 S	Wayland 15 S Cumming 11 S	March 30 S	Hanna 23 S	

1. Independent use of Bible quotations has not been counted as source parallels and therefore is not included in the averages. Percentage figures are listed according to the nearest full percent.

ANSWERS TO THE 14 SUMMARY QUESTIONS AS FOUND IN THE 15 CHAPTERS - Page 4

Summary Questions	Chapter 37	Chapter 39	Chapter 46	Chapter 53	Chapter 56
9. Minor <u>DA</u> Sources	Miller 10 S Pentecost 5 S Cumming 1 S	Hanna 5 S Farrar 2 S March 4 S Pentecost 2 S	Hanna 4 S Fleetwood 2 S Cumming 1 S Nichol 1 S	Lange 2 S Geikie 1 S	Geikie 1 S
10. Pre- <u>DA</u> Sources	Hanna 28 S Harris 1 S Miller 1 S Pentecost 1 S	Hanna 4 S Cumming 10 S March 4 S Wayland 3 S	March 23 S Fleetwood 3 S Hanna 1 S	Hanna 5 S	
11. Is <u>DA</u> Text More or less Dependent than Pre- <u>DA</u> ?	Less	Inconclusive <sup>1</sup>	Less	No basis for comparison	Does not apply
12. How does <u>DA</u> Dependent Content Compare with Independent Content?	Same	Same	Same	Inconclusive	Does not apply
13A. Is <u>DA</u> Chapt. Thematic Structure Dependent on Literary Sources?	No	No	Yes	No	No
13B. Are <u>DA</u> Chapt. Sub-units Structurally Dependent?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
14. Are Pre- <u>DA</u> txts dependent in structure?	No	Yes in some sub-sections	Partly	No basis for comparison <sup>2</sup>	No

1. The DA text takes over much of the earlier material and yet there is a great amount of independent text. The content of the Pre-DA writings would have to be fully evaluated before one could make the comparison.
2. Chapter 53 covers a journey of Christ with many episodes whereas the SP account treats only the sending out of the seventy.

ANSWERS TO THE 14 SUMMARY QUESTIONS AS FOUND IN THE 15 CHAPTERS - Page 5

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Summary Questions	Chapter 72	Chapter 75	Chapter 76	Chapter 83	Chapter 84
1A. HW or CC <u>DA</u> Texts?	Neither	Handwritten <sup>1</sup> Partly	Copy Text <sup>2</sup> Partly	Copy Text <sup>2</sup> Partly	Copy Text <sup>2</sup> Partly
1B. Pre- <u>DA</u> HW or CC Txts	Copy Text	Copy Text	Copy Text	Copy Text	Copy Text
2. Is <u>DA</u> Txt Expansion or Reduction?	Expansion	Reduction	Expansion	Reduction	Expansion
3. How does <u>DA</u> Content Compare with Pre- <u>DA</u> ?	Same	Same	No basis for comparison	Same	Same
4. How is <u>DA</u> Different from Pre- <u>DA</u> Txt?	Only treats Lord's supper	Arrangement & adds pre-trial before Annas	None	None	Adds comment on Holy Spirit
5A. Dependent Sentences <u>DA</u>	40 of 201	168 of 351	55 of 173	68 of 116	95 of 138
5B. % of Chapt. Dependence	20%	48%	32%	59%	69%
6A. Independent <u>DA</u> Sent.	136 of 201	168 of 351	115 of 173	39 of 116	28 of 138
6B. % Chapt. Independence	68%	48%	67%	34%	20%
7A. Ave. Rate of Dependence for Dependent Sent.	3.75 for 40 S	3.63 for 168 S	3.47 for 55 S	3.41 for 68 S	3.66 for 95 S
7B. Ave. Rate of Dependence for all non-Bible Sent.	.75 for 176 S	1.8 for 336 S	1.12 for 170 S	2.17 for 107 S	2.83 for 123 S
8. Major <u>DA</u> Sources	Hanna 17 S	Hanna 64 S Farrar 55 S Ingraham 17 S	Edersheim 26 S	Hanna 30 S March 38 S	Hanna 61 S March 34 S

1. A few independent sentences from Diary Book 14, 1894 appear in the DA text. We list them as DA text but they could also be viewed as Pre-DA material.
2. The sentences from manuscripts written in 1897 appear to have been written as DA texts even though they have been edited and have been combined with other materials to form the chapter of the DA text.

ANSWERS TO THE 14 SUMMARY QUESTIONS AS FOUND IN THE 15 CHAPTERS - Page 6

Summary Questions	Chapter 72	Chapter 75	Chapter 76	Chapter 83	Chapter 84
9. Minor <u>DA</u> Sources	Boyd 8 S March 4 S Pentecost 4 S Cumming 2 S Jones 2 S Lange 1 S Farrar 1 S Geikie 1 S	Bennett 8 S March 4 S Kitto 4 S Harris 3 S Edersheim 3 S Krummacher 2 S Hall 2 S Deems 2 S Andrews 2 S Jones 1 S Geikie 1 S	Hanna 10 S Ingraham 7 S Dods 7 S Smith 2 S Farrar 2 S Thayer 1 S	None	None
10. Pre- <u>DA</u> Sources	Boyd 8 S Hanna 6 S March 1 S	Farrar 82 S Hanna 43 S March 9 S Bennett 3 S Ingraham 2 S Kitto 2 S	Krummacher 1 S	Hanna 61 S March 47 S	Hanna 38 S March 30 S
11. Is <u>DA</u> Text More or less Dependent than Pre- <u>DA</u> ?	Inconclusive	Same	Same	Same	Same
12. How does <u>DA</u> Dependent Content Compare with Independent Content?	Dependent is descriptive, Independent is discursive	Same except for emphasis	Same except for emphasis	Same except for emphasis	Same except for emphasis
13A. Is <u>DA</u> Chapt. Thematic Structure Dependent on Literary Sources?	No	No	Yes	No	No
13B. Are <u>DA</u> Chapt. Sub-units Structurally Dependent?	Yes, partly	Yes, partly	Yes	Yes	Yes
14. Are Pre- <u>DA</u> txts dependent in structure?	No	Yes in some subsections	Partly	Partly	Yes in some subsections

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Question #1. Do we have primary source material for the Ellen White text? By "primary" we refer to "first-hand" material, text written by the hand of Ellen White. We have extended this definition of "primary" to include the typed copies of Ellen White's handwritten materials made by her secretaries who were employed to make corrected copies of Ellen White's manuscript. The corrections are understood to have been limited to punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

The examination of the original documents or at least the earliest work of Ellen White is necessary for understanding the role of Ellen White and that of her secretaries in the production of the Ellen White writings. This question opens the way to the careful analysis of the documents behind the published works as we know them.

Answer. Yes and no. No, if by text we have in mind a complete chapter. Searches by the staff of the White Estate office and our own investigations have failed to turn up any handwritten texts for a single one of the 87 chapters of the DA text. In fact, there is not even a secretarial copy of a single DA chapter as typed from an Ellen White manuscript text.<sup>1</sup> The answer is yes, however, if we refer

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<sup>1</sup>We exclude the DA "Working Manuscript" which contains about one-third of the DA text in chapter form as typed by one or more of Ellen White's literary assistants. We indicated earlier in this report, Introduction, Part B, page 193, that the text appears to have been a working manuscript of a portion of the DA text and there is no evidence that any of it was typed directly from Ellen White's handwritten text.

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to sentences and chapter portions. We do have several sentences in chapter 14 which are first found in Diary Book 32, 1899, a few sentences in chapter 24 which are also found in Diary Book 14, 1889, 1890, and a number of independent comments in chapter 75 from Diary Book 18, 1894. Three additional DA chapters have significant portions which may be found in typed copies of manuscripts dating from 1897, only a year before the DA was published. Neither handwritten nor corrected copy texts were found for 9 of the 15 DA chapters of our study. The pre-DA materials yielded the greater amount of "primary" text material for Ellen White's writings. In these writings, including unpublished texts on the life of Christ, texts written and/or published as independent articles, letters, or manuscripts, and texts never picked up for the DA, we found handwritten and corrected-copy portions treating the content of 10 of the 15 chapters. The handwritten texts as well as the secretarial copies contained both dependent and independent sentences.

Question #2. Does the DA text represent an expansion or reduction in comparison with Ellen White's earlier published volumes on the life of Christ, Spirit of Prophecy, Volume II, and the first 19 chapters of Volume III, 1877 and 1878? The concern behind this question has to do with the influence of literary sources on the expansion of Ellen White's writings from the four-volume work of Spiritual Gifts which was completed by 1864 to the larger page format

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and multiple-volume sets of the The Spirit of Prophecy, Testimonies for the Church, and Conflict of the Ages series, not to mention independent works providing counsels to the youth, to ministers and workers, and memoirs on the progress of the Advent Movement and the White family in particular, all of which may be found included to some extent in the earlier Spiritual Gifts. Is there an expansion of the same subject matter in these later treatments, and if so, is it to be explained on the grounds of Ellen White's leaning more heavily on the writings of others?

Answer. On the question of expansion or reduction the evidence presents a mixed picture. According to the summaries of the 15 chapters, 7 chapters involved an expansion, 4 a reduction, 2 were about the same length as the earlier publication, and 2 were of so different a content that a comparison was not possible.

It is clear that Ellen White used additional sources in her writings on the life of Christ during the years following the production of the Spirit of Prophecy volumes. On some topics she wrote so much more that the chapter in the DA text, though longer than the SP text, was still a reduction when compared to her previous writings. The length of several of the 15 chapters was about the same as the comparable Spirit of Prophecy chapter but the treatment of the subject was so different that we could not help but wonder if the question still applied.



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In regard to the basic issue behind the question, however, a rather consistent image emerged. Ellen White continued to write on certain topics because they were of special value in her encouragement and counsel for the Advent believers. She also found some topics lent themselves well to the evangelical purpose behind the writing of The Desire of Ages. There is no question but that she found help in the additional sources but the evidence does not indicate that the source parallels alone account for the expansion. In every chapter involving expansion her independent comment was also found. The fact that the DA text is generally less dependent than the earlier texts supports this contention.

Question #3. How does the content of the DA text compare in general with the content of Ellen White's earlier writings on the life of Christ where the same subject matter is involved? The concern here is not to provide an in-depth content analysis of the text. This is a study in source criticism. The question is primarily directed to the concern as to whether the use of more or different sources influenced the direction of Ellen White's writings. We would expect that the purpose of the DA text differs somewhat from that of the earlier SP productions and that Ellen White's points of view would have undergone a natural development and maturity as happens to any individual, especially a public religious figure.

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Answer. There is strong agreement over the 15 chapters that the content of the DA text is basically the same as found in the SP text. We would expect that some differences would occur in the very process of revision. These differences will be discussed under question 4 which follows. A consistent variation found in the DA text was the stronger spiritual appeals and lessons. It is difficult to explain this dissimilarity by an appeal to the influence of sources. The spiritual emphasis is not characteristic of the sources. Rather it is likely that Ellen White emphasizes this aspect because the DA was designed to be a work for colporteurs. Ellen White was anxious that as a result of this study of the life of Christ many would be led to the foot of the cross.

Question #4. Are there any significant differences in content between the DA text and the pre-DA writings? Once again the interest in the question is not one of content analysis as such. We are looking for major source influence on the material content of the chapter.

Answer. Under question 3 we learned that no major differences were found between the DA text and the earlier writings on the life of Christ apart from the spiritual emphasis which went along with the differing purpose for publishing the DA. We therefore changed the question slightly in our summary chart so that we could point out differences without giving them the standing of

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"significant" or "major." The differences vary from chapter to chapter and it is difficult to ascertain the degree of influence exerted by the literary sources, especially when we take into consideration that parallels from Hanna's life of Christ are found in both the SP and the DA texts.

The variations between the SP and DA text appear to fall into two broad categories. There are differences in the stories included in the chapter or in the arrangement of the chapter. We might label these dissimilarities as editorial or redactional differences. A second type of variation involved revision. Modifications of this type brought the text into greater harmony with Scripture.

It is not at all clear that the sources influenced all of these changes. Hanna has no comparable chapter to that of DA chapter 3 and Ellen White's only source was Harris whose work was not narrative or chronological. We would expect Ellen White to broaden the application of John's life and mission (chapter 10) from the more limited Adventist context to include Christianity in general. Ellen White herself or Marian Davis could have recognized from a general reading of the Gospel records that John's visit to Jesus in the wilderness and his discipleship prior to the call by the Jordan as mentioned in the earlier SP text is extrabiblical and would probably best be left out of chapters 13 and 14 of DA. The same explanation would apply to the different harmonization of the Scripture accounts on feeding the five

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thousand (chapter 39) and reducing the number of cock crowings from three to two in commenting on the denials of Peter (chapter 75). The best arguments in favor of source influence seem to be found in the content and arrangement of chapter 75 on the Jewish trials of Jesus and perhaps the development of a separate chapter on the life of Judas (chapter 76). It must be recognized in the latter case, however, that the sources she used emphasized the general character of Judas and Ellen White had already developed several articles on the life of Judas. Though Hanna is used heavily in commenting on the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in chapter 84, the addition of this section on the Holy Spirit is a natural revision of the SP account which already had the two upper-room appearances of Jesus following His resurrection. The Gospel of John is singular in recording both occasions and only John describes the second appearance and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on the night of the resurrection. Either Marian Davis or Ellen White would have noticed the SP account did not include this important aspect of the first encounter between Jesus and His disciples.

It seems fair to say, therefore, that the sources do not play a significant role in effecting the differences that we have noted between the DA and pre-DA texts.

Question #5. What is the nature of the dependency of the DA text on literary sources? What proportion of the chapter contains sentences which in their literary

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composition reflect the influence of sources?

Answer. This question points to the very heart of the investigation. Before summarizing the results of our analysis of the 15 chapters let us also present questions 6 and 7. These three questions are closely related as are their answers. We have chosen to present a composite summary answer on questions 5, 6, and 7, following question 7 below.

Question #6. What is the nature of the independence of the DA text from the influence of literary sources? What proportion of the chapter contains sentences which do not reflect the influence of literary sources in their composition?

Answer. See under our answer for question 7 which follows.

Question #7. What is the degree of dependence for the dependent sentences when evaluated according to the rating scale? How do the dependent sentences rate when figured against all sentences in the chapter other than Bible quotations?

Answer. The answers to questions 5 through 7 for each of the 15 chapters have been supplied in the six-page chart above. To assist the reader in following through on how these separate figures have been processed for our summary answers to these three questions, we have developed a separate chart which appears on the following page. On

STATISTICS ON SOURCE PARALLEL EVALUATIONS FOR THE DA TEXT

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
DA TEXT	Sentences in each chapter	Bible quotations	Strict Independence	Partial Independence	Source Bible	Loose Paraphrase	Simple Paraphrase	Strict Paraphrase	Verbatim	Strict Verbatim	Dependent sentences	Chapter % Bible	% Strict Independence	Chapter % dependent	Ave. rate dependency all sentences	Ave. rate dependent sentences	Sentences showing some independence	Chapter % showing some independence
ABC* Type	No. of Sent.	B2 0	I1 0	I2 1	B1 2	P3 3	P2 4	P1 5	V2 6	V1 7	Cols. 5-11	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 12	Cols. 4-12	Col. 12	Cols. 3-5	Cols. 3-5
46-A	89#	3	48	8	0	2	15	11	2	0	38	3%**	54%	43%	1.64	3.7	59	66%
56-A	97	0	96	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0%	99%	1%	.01	1.0	97	100%
83-A	116#	9	39	17	7	2	18	21	3	0	68	7%	34%	59%	2.17	3.41	65	56%
13-A	127	9	110	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	8	7%	87%	6%	.14	2.1	124	98%
3-A	130	4	67	24	5	20	9	0	1	0	59	3%	52%	45%	1.08	2.3	95	73%
A-Tot	559	25	360	55	12	24	45	32	6	0	174	4.5%	64.4%	31.1%	0.99	3.03	440	78.7%
84-B	138#	15	28	17	7	2	39	25	5	0	95	11%	20%	69%	2.83	3.66	60	43%
24-B	153	9	112	9	3	8	10	1	1	0	32	6%	73%	21%	.63	2.8	130	85%
39-B	158	12	107	6	4	3	20	5	1	0	39	8%	68%	25%	.92	3.4	125	79%
76-B	173	3	115	8	1	14	21	11	0	0	55	1%	67%	32%	1.12	3.47	126	71%
53-B	193	25	142	4	5	2	9	6	0	0	26	13%	74%	13%	.51	3.31	171	89%
B-Tot	815	64	504	44	20	29	99	48	7	0	247	7.9%	61.8%	30.3%	1.13	3.44	612	75.1%
72-C	201	25	136	7	0	3	16	14	0	0	40	12%	68%	20%	.85	3.75	168	84%
37-C	217	12	146	9	14	12	9	10	5	0	59	6%	67%	27%	.92	3.2	167	77%
10-C	231	30	166	10	3	5	15	2	0	0	35	13%	72%	15%	.50	2.9	206	89%
14-C	250	18	132	15	22	18	31	9	5	0	100	7%	53%	40%	1.34	3.1	165	66%
75-C	351	15	168	38	13	2	41	68	6	0	168	4%	48%	48%	1.82	3.6	221	63%
C-Tot	1250	100	748	79	52	40	112	103	16	0	402	8.0%	59.8%	32.2%	1.18	3.39	927	74.2%
Total	2624	189	1612	178	84	93	256	183	29	0	823	7.2%	61.4%	31.4%	1.12	3.33	1979	75.4%

879

\* - ABC indicates chapter length; A=5 shortest, B=5 medium length, C=longest. # - Evaluation units not sentences; chapter 46 has 88 sentences, 83 has 109, and 84 has 137, or 2615 for the 15 chapters. \*\* - Percentages for each chapter have been rounded to the nearest full percent.

## Summary and Conclusions

this chart the "Statistics on Source Parallel Evaluations for the DA Text" are presented in 19 columns beginning from left to right. We invite the reader to follow the chart as we summarize the answers for questions 5, 6, and 7. For the purpose of registering source dependency, it matters not if Ellen White or Marian Davis did the writing and/or editing.

Please note that the chapters are not listed in column 1 in the natural sequential order. We have listed the chapters in groups of five according to their length. The first five chapters constitute the "A" group (46-A, 56-A, 83-A, 13-A, and 3-A). They are the shortest of the 15 randomly selected DA chapters. The next group, the "B" group, is composed of the medium-length DA chapters, and the "C" group is the designation for the five longest of the 15 chapters. The 87 chapters were listed by length from the shortest to the longest and the random sampling was stratified so as to select five of the shortest, five from the medium-length chapters, and five from the longest chapters. These three groups made up the 15 chapters of the study. The chart lists them from the shortest to the longest as may be confirmed by noting the number of sentences or sentence-evaluation units given in column 2.

Under columns 3 through 11 we list the number of source parallels for each chapter according to the type of literary dependency. At the head of these columns we indicate the sentence type, such as Strict Independence or Loose

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Paraphrase. We also list the symbol indicating the type of dependency or independence as well as the valuation rate for each type. Strict Independence rates a zero (0) dependency rate for not showing any dependence. The highest rate, 7, is given to Strict Verbatim which is the most dependence a sentence can show, i.e., a virtual duplication of the source sentence. These sentence parallels for each chapter have been summed up in column 11 and compared against the total sentences of the chapter for a percentage rating under column 15. These same sentence parallels are rated according to the value for each type or degree of dependency and then averaged for each chapter under columns 16 and 17. Column 16 gives the rate when the dependency is averaged for all sentences of the chapter, including the independent sentences. Column 17 gives the average dependency rate for the chapter when figuring only the dependent sentences. In neither calculation do we include the Bible quotations in the DA text which are not dependent upon the influence of the source.

The final two columns at the margin on the right, columns 18 and 19, give a positive value to the Partial Independence sentences and count the Bible Quotations as independent since their use was not influenced by the source. In the previous figures the Partial Independent sentences were given a negative credit, i.e., were given a point for dependency. In columns 18 and 19 these same



## Summary and Conclusions

sentences are given a point for independence since Ellen White added a measure of independence to the sentences which also show the influence of sources. So often in source critical studies the emphasis is placed on the use of sources and the independence of the writer is minimized. We have attempted to at least partially protect ourselves against this accusation by making this positive evaluation for Ellen White in columns 18 and 19. We recognize that there are subtle influences of the source in content and arrangement of sentences which bear no similarity in verbal expression. We estimate that these influences are more than equaled by the work of the writer in those sentences which are dependent but not verbatim. The hand of the writer is apparent in the composition of a Loose Paraphrase sentence even though we only list the sentence under dependency.

The last line of the chart where the totals for the 15 chapters are listed provides the data we need to answer questions 5 through 7. Our research on the DA text covered 2,624 evaluation units for the 2,615 actual sentences of the text. Several sentences were split into independent clauses for evaluation purposes. Of these 2,624 sentence units, 823 were rated as dependent (col. 12). On an average we may say that 31.4 percent of the DA text is dependent to some extent on literary sources (col. 15). Turning to question 6, these same 2,624 sentence units included 1,612 sentences which rated Strict Independence. On a percentage basis our

## Summary and Conclusions

figures indicate that 61.4 percent of the DA text has to be credited to the independent work of Ellen White and her literary assistants. To put it another way, there are twice as many independent sentences as there are dependent sentences. The rate of dependency, which is the concern of question 7, averages out at 3.33 or at the level of Loose Paraphrase when viewing the degree of dependency for dependent sentences (col.17). When looking at the average dependency rate for an entire chapter, including the independent sentences, the rate drops to 1.12 or about the level of Partial Independence (col. 16).

Question #8. What were the major sources used by Ellen White in writing The Desire of Ages? By major sources we have in mind those literary works which provided more than 10 sentence parallels for any one chapter.

Answer. We have listed on page 884 the 10 works by 9 writers which functioned as major literary sources in the writing of the DA text. Of course some of these same writers served as minor sources as well for chapters where their use is not so dominant. William Hanna is by far the most frequently used source, appearing to some degree in all but two of the 15 chapters and furnishing the greatest number of parallels. Daniel March takes second place, furnishing parallels for 7 of the 15 chapters through two of his works which include material on selected events in the life of Jesus. Apart from these two authors Ellen White

MAJOR SOURCES FOR THE DA TEXT<sup>1</sup>  
 (Number of parallels per DA chapter)

Authors and Titles	Chs.	3	10	13	14	24	37	39	46	53	56	72	75	76	83	84	Total
William Hanna, <u>The Life of Christ</u>			8	8	49	13	29	5	4	23		17	64	10	30	61	321
Daniel March, <u>Night Scenes of the Bible</u>															38	34	72
John Harris, <u>The Great Teacher</u>	44						15						3				62
Frederic Farrar, <u>The Life of Christ</u>					2			2				1	55	2			62
Daniel March, <u>Walks and Homes of Jesus</u>						15		4	30			4	4				57
George Jones, <u>Life-Scenes from the Four Gospels</u>			5		44							2	1				52
Alfred Edersheim, <u>The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah</u>													3	26			29
J. H. Ingraham, <u>The Prince of the House of David</u>					2								17	7			26
Francis Wayland, <u>Salvation by Christ</u>								15									15
John Cumming, <u>Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament: St. John</u>								11									11

1. A MAJOR source is any source which has furnished more than ten parallels for any given chapter. We list all parallels furnished by the major source for all chapters of the DA text.

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appears to have utilized a given book for writing on a specific topic. Harris' work on Christ is arranged thematically and on occasion Ellen White will dip into his text when treating a topic rather than an event or series of events such as called for in a narrative text. Her use of Harris for chapter 3 and for several sentences of chapter 37 illustrates such usage. The other six authors are used mainly for one chapter. Another characteristic of Ellen White's use of sources is that, with the exception of Hanna who is frequently utilized, more often than not she will use only one major source per chapter. Discounting the input from Hanna, two chapters did have three major sources and three chapters had no major source even when Hanna's contribution was included. We shall have more to say on this point under question 10 below.

Question #9. What were the minor sources used by Ellen White in writing The Desire of Ages? Minor sources are those which have furnished no more than 10 sentence parallels for any given chapter.

Answer. On pages 886 and 887 below we list the 21 minor sources and their 20 authors, two of which, Cumming and March, also wrote works which served Ellen White as major sources. Several of these writers provided as few as one or two sentence parallels for only one chapter out of the 15. Were this the only pattern of Ellen White's use of sources we would be tempted to discount such figures. But

MINOR SOURCES FOR THE DA TEXT<sup>1</sup> - Page 1  
 (Number of parallels per DA chapter)

988

Authors and Titles	Chs.	3	10	13	14	24	37	39	46	53	56	72	75	76	83	84	Total
John Fleetwood, <u>The Life of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ</u>			10		1				2								13
Cunningham Geikie, <u>The Life and Words of Christ</u>			9							1	1	1	1				13
George Pentecost, <u>Bible Studies</u> (1888, 1889)							5	2				4					11
James Miller, <u>Week-Day Religion</u>							10										10
Robert Boyd, <u>The World's Hope</u>												8					8
James Bennett, <u>Lectures on the History of Jesus Christ</u>													8				8
Marcus Dods, <u>The Gospel of John</u>														7			7
E. W. Thayer, <u>Sketches from the Life of Jesus</u>	6													1			7
John Kitto, <u>Daily Bible Illustrations</u>			2										4				6
William S. Kennedy, <u>Messianic Prophecy</u>	5																5
Daniel March, <u>Days of the Son of Man</u>						4											4
Johann Lange, <u>The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ</u>										2		1					3

1. A MINOR source is any source which has furnished no more than ten parallels for any given chapter.

MINOR SOURCES FOR THE DA TEXT<sup>1</sup> - Page 2  
 (Number of parallels per DA chapter)

887

Authors and Titles	Chs.	3	10	13	14	24	37	39	46	53	56	72	75	76	83	84	Total
<u>Samuel J. Andrews, The Life of our Lord upon the Earth...</u>													2				2
<u>John Cumming, Minor Works, (Third Series)</u>												2					2
<u>John Cumming, Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament: St. Matthew</u>							1		1								2
<u>Charles F. Deems, Who Was Jesus</u>													2				2
<u>Joseph Hall, Contemplations on the Historical Essays of the Old and New Testaments</u>													2				2
<u>Frederick Wilhelm Krummacher, The Suffering Saviour</u>													2				2
<u>Henry Melvill, Sermons</u>					2												2
<u>William Smith, ed. A Dictionary of the Bible</u>														2			2
<u>W. R. Nicoll, The Incarnate Saviour, A Life of Christ</u>									1								1
(Multiple authors in various combinations) <sup>1</sup>		4	1														(5)

1. In several instances it appears that Ellen White combined material from two authors in the composition of one sentence. Rather than list the combinations separately we have placed these parallels under one heading.

## Summary and Conclusions

we cannot overlook the fact that a number of our major sources, such as Farrar, Jones, and Ingraham, furnished as few as one or two parallels for certain chapters. It is altogether possible, if not probable, that some of these minor sources for the 15 chapters also served as major sources for chapters not treated in this investigation. Further evidence pointing in this direction may be found under our answer for question 10 below.

Before leaving question 9 there are two more aspects of the evidence to be noticed. In harmony with the general pattern of major source usage, generally the use of the minor source was concentrated in one chapter. Fleetwood supplies 10 parallels for chapter 10 and only three parallels for two other chapters. Geikie is used 9 times in chapter 10 and only once in four other chapters. Overall, 14 of the 22 sources were only used in one chapter, 5 sources furnished parallels for 2 chapters, 2 sources provided parallels for 3 chapters, and 1 source was used in 5 chapters. Looking at the evidence from the point of view of the chapter, the typical pattern shows that a chapter is likely to use few minor sources. Three chapters listed more than 3 sources (75 used 7, 72 used 5, and 10 used 4), but the remaining 12 contained parallels from three or less.

Question #10. What sources were used by Ellen White in the production of her articles, letters, and manuscripts on the life of Christ? We have already clearly shown that

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The Desire of Ages was intended to be a revision of those portions of the Spirit of Prophecy which dealt with the life of Christ. It would be developed by Marian Davis, Ellen White's "bookmaker," from a scrapbook to be compiled on the materials Ellen White had written through the years on the life and ministry of Christ as well as from specific manuscripts Ellen White would add to complete the narrative commentary. Though we do not know the contents of that scrapbook which served as the storehouse for the various texts to be selected for the DA, any document on the life of Christ written before the mid-1890s would likely have been included between its covers.

We have taken into account in this basic category all of the pre-1898 texts, since even the 1897 manuscripts do not represent a chapter of the DA text. The DA chapters were evidently constructed from the selected textual portions of articles, letters, manuscripts, and diary notations, published and unpublished, written throughout the years right up to the time of the publishing of The Desire of Ages. This question focuses our attention on the source parallels to be found in these separate documents on the life of Christ as well as in the earlier volumes of the Spirit of Prophecy which are at the heart of the revision. Naturally we include in the review some texts which were not incorporated into the DA and other materials at a stage before they became edited and combined with companion texts



## Summary and Conclusions

to form the text of DA. These earlier texts are included for the purpose of source analysis. No attempt is made to study their independent sentences.

Answer. Since the DA text is largely an edited compilation of text portions written by Ellen White in earlier documents, including letters, articles, manuscripts, and to a small extent her diary notations, we would naturally expect that the source parallels found in the DA text are first to be found in the earlier writings. This is exactly what we find for most of the chapters. Because of the duplication of the earlier text in the DA chapters, we often omitted the previous writings from our text presentation. An exception to this practice was when we found the earlier text not duplicated in the DA or when the earlier text exhibited greater dependency than the later DA text.

The overlapping of the DA with the previous writings results in the same source parallels being found in both the pre-DA and DA texts. A few source parallels occur only in the earlier materials because portions of the earlier writings were not utilized in the DA text. On the following page we have included a chart listing those sources which furnished at least 10 parallels on the content of one of our 15 chapters. We have underscored the word "content" because we include in this term the content of any Ellen White document which in part touches on the subject matter of the

SOURCES FOR THE PRE-DA TEXT<sup>1</sup>  
 (Number of parallels per DA chapter  
 pre-DA material)

Authors and Titles	Chs.	3	10	13	14	24	37	39	46	53	56	72	75	76	83	84	Total
William Hanna, <u>The Life of Christ</u>			21	28		9	28	4	1	5		6	43		61	38	244
John Harris, <u>The Great Teacher</u>	100			30			1										131
Henry Melvill, <u>Sermons</u>				21	68												89
Frederic Farrar, <u>The Life of Christ</u>													82				82
Daniel March, <u>Night Scenes of the Bible</u>															47	30	77
Daniel March, <u>Walks and Homes of Jesus</u>						37		4	23			1	9				74
Octavius Winslow, <u>The Glory of the Redeemer</u>					53												53
John Fleetwood, <u>The Life of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ</u>			17	6					3								26
Cunningham Geikie, <u>The Life and Words of Christ</u>			23														23
John Cumming, <u>Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament: St. John</u>								10									10

1. The sources providing parallels for the Pre-DA texts were not classified as "Major" or "Minor." We list here those which furnished ten or more parallels for Ellen White's earlier writings on the life of Christ.

## Summary and Conclusions

chapter as found in the DA text. For example in chapter 14 of the DA Ellen White comments on Jesus' statement to Nathanael that "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man." (DA, p. 142) When she was commenting on this same topic in Manuscript 13, 1884, she extended her comment to include the dream of Jacob in which he saw a ladder stretching from earth to heaven. In so doing she drew quite heavily on one of Melvill's sermons. In Manuscript 13 Ellen White was writing on the life of Christ and on the content of chapter 14 even though some of her comment in the earlier text was not used in developing the DA text. The same kind of situation may be found in Ellen White's writings on the temptations of Christ which are covered in chapters 12 and 13 of the DA text. Many of the sentences of Diary Books 14 and 32 where she writes on the subject of Christ's humiliation are dealing with the experience of Jesus' temptation. She is writing on the life of Christ even though not all of her comments are picked up in the DA text. We have therefore included this material where it revealed the use of sources because the text, being earlier and found in Ellen White's handwriting, more accurately represents her use of sources. The DA text as an edited text cannot help but to some degree mask that usage.

The list of sources utilized in the pre-DA writings shows that as with the DA text, William Hanna provides the

## Summary and Conclusions

largest number of parallels. Daniel March furnished the second largest number of parallels through Ellen White's use of two of his books. John Harris' The Great Teacher as a single book supplied the second highest number of parallels. We may also note that Ellen White tended to concentrate her use of a source. Most books were used for only one or two subjects.

The pre-DA sources add only one new author to our list of literary sources, Octavius Winslow. Henry Melvill was named under the minor sources for supplying two parallels but here we find him to be a major contributor with 89 parallels.

In discussing the use of parallels in the pre-DA material it may be of interest to the reader to notice the parallels we found in Ellen White's diary materials and in her letters and manuscripts. It is well known that Ellen White's secretaries helped to compose her journal articles from her writings. We have already reviewed in the introduction to this study the role of Marian Davis, Ellen White's "bookmaker." Some students of Ellen White's writings have wondered if these literary assistants were involved in copying or paraphrasing the works of these authors we find represented in the writings of Ellen White. On pages 894 and 895 which follow we have prepared a chart on the handwritten and typescript texts of Ellen White. These texts are as close as we can come to the original work

MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE FOR USE OF SOURCES BY ELLEN G. WHITE

DA Chapter	Handwritten Texts	Typescript Texts <sup>1</sup>	Parallels	Literary Sources Used
3	Diary Book 17, 1891 (Pages 98-100) -----	MS 24, 1891 [copied in 1903] Lt 43, 1895 MS 9, 1896	10  3 20	Harris - <u>The Great Teacher</u>  Harris - <u>The Great Teacher</u> Harris - <u>The Great Teacher</u>
10	-----	-----		
13	----- Diary Book 14, 1890 (Pages 272-5, 282-3, 293-5) Diary Book 32, 1899 (Pages 5-37)	Lt 1a, 1872 -----	10 26  33	Hanna - <u>The Life of Christ</u> Winslow - <u>Glory of the Redeemer</u>  Winslow, Melvill and Harris [Sources used in blocks]
14	Manuscript 13, 1884  Diary Book 32, 1899 (Pages 39-48)	----- -----	56  8	Melvill, "Jacob's Vision and Vow"  Hanna, <u>The Life of Christ</u>
24	Diary Book 14, 1889,90 (Pages 73-77)	-----  Lt 4, 1889	2  9	March, <u>Walks and Homes of Jesus &amp; Days of the Son of Man</u> March, <u>Walks and Homes of Jesus</u>
37	-----	-----		
39	-----	-----		
46	-----	-----		
53	-----	-----		
56	-----	-----		

<sup>1</sup>Typescript Texts are typed texts of Ellen White's handwritten materials, i.e., letters, manuscripts, diary notations, etc., as taken from her writing journals by her secretaries.

MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE FOR USE OF SOURCES BY ELLEN G. WHITE - Page 2

DA Chapter	Handwritten Texts	Typescript Texts	Parallels	Literary Sources Used
72	- - - -	MS 35, 1897 <sup>1</sup>	8	Boyd - <u>The World's Hope</u>
75 <sup>2</sup>	- - - -	MS 51, 1897	83	Farrar - <u>The Life of Christ</u>
	- - - -	MS 102, 1897	3	Hanna's & Farrar's <u>Life of Christ</u>
	- - - -	MS 104, 1897	11	Hanna's & Farrar's <u>Life of Christ</u>
76	- - - -	MS 28, 1897	9	Dods, <u>Gospel of John</u>
	- - - -	MS 120, 1897	16	Edersheim, <u>Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah</u>
83	- - - -	MS 113, 1897 (partly)	14	March, <u>Night Scenes</u> and Hanna, <u>The Life of Christ</u>
84	- - - -	MS 113, 1897 (partly)	12	March, <u>Night Scenes</u> and Hanna, <u>The Life of Christ</u>
	- - - -	MS 149, 1897	22	Hanna, <u>The Life of Christ</u>

895

1. Manuscript 47, 1897 contains a few sentences on the topic of chapter 72 but no source parallels were found in the text.
2. Some handwritten material from Diary Book 18, 1894, was carried over into DA chapter 75 via Manuscript 111, 1897. Since these sentences involved independent comments of Ellen White they are not listed here.

## Summary and Conclusions

of Ellen White, given the documents preserved in the White Estate Office. The pre-DA documents clearly show that Ellen White herself was involved in copying from the literary sources. We list in the table the number of source parallels as well as the particular source from which the parallels came.

Question #11. How does the DA text compare with the pre-DA text in the use of literary sources? When this question was first formulated the concern was to discover if Ellen White's handwritten texts or earlier writing methods used sources, and if so, was such usage different from her later writings, particularly in such edited works as the DA. We were also interested in discovering if the same or other sources were used at different periods in the writings of Ellen White and if the ways of using these sources differed.

Answer. As the research project developed it soon became apparent that we would not be able to give the pre-DA text the comprehensive review necessary for making a comparative evaluation between the various earlier documents and the DA text. Research assistance and time demanded that we limit our study of the earlier materials to the location and evaluation of source parallels. Since the DA text was largely based upon these previous writings we expected and found many duplicate sentence units between the pre-DA and the DA texts. In those chapters where there was heavy dependence on earlier writings we listed the duplicated units in Table A of the analysis.

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We usually omitted from the text presentation of each chapter those sentence units which duplicated the DA text and also those which our source studies indicated as being independent. We included the sentence units which contain literary source parallels not included in the DA text or which demonstrated a greater degree of dependency than did the DA text. Exceptions to this policy were made when we needed to establish the context to justify the legitimacy of the comparison or where we were presenting an entire text.

The statistics given on page 898, immediately following, relate to the sentence units from the pre-DA text which are found in the text presentations. The figures do not include the dependent sentences which duplicate the DA text nor the independent sentences of the pre-DA materials (apart from the exceptions already noted). For this reason we were not able to complete the comparisons as called for in columns 13-16, 18, and 19.

Even though complete comparisons are not possible for the reasons stated, the statistics appear to support the general conclusion given on page 868 to question 11. Every chapter on which there is enough evidence, i.e., where there are pre-DA texts, and where the content of the earlier text matches that of the DA text, the DA text shows itself to be less dependent or of about the same dependency as the earlier texts. We did find an exception here and there when in preparing the DA text the writer evidently returned to



STATISTICS ON SOURCE PARALLEL EVALUATIONS FOR THE PRE-DA TEXT

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
DA TEXT	Sentences in each chapter	Bible quotations	Strict Independence	Partial Independence	Source Bible	Loose Paraphrase	Simple Paraphrase	Strict Paraphrase	Verbatim	Strict Verbatim	Dependent sentences	Chapter % Bible	% Strict Independence	Chapter % dependent	Ave. rate dependency all sentences	Ave. rate dependent sentences	Sentences showing some independence	Chapter % showing some independence
ABC Type	No. of Sent.	B2 0	I1 0	I2 1	B1 2	P3 3	P2 4	P1 5	V2 6	V1 7	Cols. 5-11	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 12	Cols. 4-12	Col. 12	Cols. 3-5	Cols. 3-5
46-A	29	0	2	8	1	0	7	9	2	0	27					3.5		
56-A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0.0		
83-A	113	2	3	22	0	5	35	38	8	0	108					3.8		
13-A	246	2	106	48	9	8	32	33	7	1	138		DOES	DOES		3.1	DOES	DOES
3-A	100	1	5	28	8	19	29	6	4	0	94		DOES	DOES		2.9	DOES	DOES
A-Tot	488	5	116	106	18	32	103	86	21	1	367		DOES	DOES		3.31	DOES	DOES
84-B	70	0	2	12	5	3	13	26	9	0	68		NOT	NOT		3.93	NOT	NOT
24-B	57	0	8	11	0	4	14	11	9	0	49		NOT	NOT		3.8	NOT	NOT
39-B	24	1	2	7	0	2	7	5	0	0	21		NOT	NOT		3.1	NOT	NOT
76-B	49	1	9	9	0	10	14	6	0	0	39		APPLY	APPLY		3.2	APPLY	APPLY
53-B	5	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	5		APPLY	APPLY		3.6	APPLY	APPLY
B-Tot	205	2	21	40	5	19	51	49	18	0	182		APPLY	APPLY		3.65	APPLY	APPLY
72-C	16	0	1	3	3	0	5	4	0	0	15					3.3		
37-C	39	1	7	5	14	2	4	4	2	0	31					2.8		
10-C	68	0	4	9	2	2	24	18	9	0	64					4.0		
14-C	102	0	22	13	3	7	9	19	24	5	80					4.4		
75-C	262	24	98	29	9	2	42	52	6	0	140					3.7		
C-Tot	487	25	132	59	31	13	84	97	41	5	330					3.82		
Total	1180	32	269	205	54	64	238	232	80	6	879					3.57		

## Summary and Conclusions

the source rather than merely taking the earlier version of Ellen White's comments on the life of Christ.

When we compare the statistics from the parallel evaluations for the 15 chapters of the DA text found on page 879 with the parallel evaluations from the pre-DA materials the greater dependency for the earlier texts is readily apparent. The 1,180 sentences of the pre-DA writings contained 80 sentences we evaluated as Verbatim while the 2,624 DA sentences yielded only 29 sentences in this category. The earlier writings produced 232 Strict Paraphrase sentences against 183 such sentences for over twice as many sentences for the DA text.

The greater degree of dependency for the earlier texts apparently comes from a direct use of the sources in the pre-DA text whereas the DA text is an edited text which for the most part has been compiled from various earlier materials. We found no clear indication of a different method of borrowing from literary sources in the later materials when compared against the earlier texts. We found verbatim and paraphrase passages in the later manuscripts as well as in the earlier manuscript and diary writings.

Question #12. How does the content of the dependent sentences compare with the content of the independent sentences? This question was set forth to direct our attention to the type of material taken from the sources. Did Ellen White mainly use sources to furnish historical and

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geographical background information which she, having no formal education beyond the elementary level, would not have studied? Did the sources provide descriptive color not to be expected from the visions which would have given Ellen White the theological and spiritual content? Finally, would the visions have provided some "eye-witness" details not available to the ordinary writer commenting on the life of Christ?

Answer. Apart from chapters 13 and 56 which did not contain enough literary parallels to make such a comparison, we found no basic difference in the type of content between the dependent and independent sentences. One is not able to look at a sentence and confidently conclude on the basis of content that it is dependent or independent. Both types of sentences include descriptive, devotional, spiritual, theological, and moral exhortation.

The differences we noted were in the proportion of sentences, or the emphasis. Sources seem to be employed more often to provide background and descriptive comment than for devotional and evangelical comment. Chapter 72 provides an example of this different emphasis. One is more apt to find Ellen White's independent comment in the moralizing or theological commentary. Where the source might treat the Christian appeal in a sentence or two, Ellen White is more likely to have a paragraph or two. Where a source might only make a brief reference to the reaction of

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heaven or the purposes of the evil one, Ellen White might develop several paragraphs on the topic. Chapters 75, 76, 83, and 84 are good examples of similar content but with differing degrees of stress.

We also found that where the source would be indefinite and suggestive Ellen White would often be positive and definite. Where the source might invoke the use of imagination and supposition or in other words make clear that it was not necessarily dealing with the real facts of the case, Ellen White's descriptive commentary reads like a work of history. The reader is not left imagining what happened but imagining what it must have been like to have lived back there and to have witnessed the events which happened as described.

Question #13. Is the literary or thematic structure of the chapters of the DA text dependent on the literary structures of the sources used in composing the DA text? What about the literary subunits of the chapter? Do they reflect the same thematic development as found in the subunits of the sources?

This question gets at the redaction or editing of the chapters of the DA text. A writer may borrow from another writer ideas of structure, thematic arrangement and development, chapter titles, and even pictures, in addition to using sentences from the writer's text. The question of dependency of the DA text is broadened in this question to

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include source influence on arrangement of the DA chapter, either in terms of the whole chapter or with reference to its subsections.

Answer. To the question of source influence on the chapters as a complete composition we would answer that in most cases the DA text is independent. The DA often uses more than one source for each chapter and therefore the resulting arrangement is a construction involving multiple sources. That combination makes for a new composition developed by the editor or writer of the DA text. The structure of chapter 24 apparently comes from March who combined the two Nazareth visits into one event. This approach to the rejection of Jesus by His friends of Nazareth does not follow the biblical account nor the typical chronological outline usually found in the DA. The basic order of chapter 46 is Lukan but the elaborations on the lessons to be learned follows the outline of March. Chapter 76 combines the influences of three sources but the basic development of a character study of Judas and the episodes from his life which are used to sketch the inner life of Judas depend heavily on Edersheim and to some degree on Hanna.

Apart from chapters 10 and 13 we find there is definite dependence in the literary construction of the chapter subunits. The subunits of the DA text are often developed out of the individual manuscripts which made up the pre-DA

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writings. Ellen White would use one source to write on a given unit of a particular story and then take another source to comment on a second part of the story. At other times she would write an article on one aspect of the life of Jesus using one source and later write a second article on the same aspect using a different source. In the DA text these earlier writings would be brought together and it would appear that Ellen White was mixing her sources in the writing of the DA chapter. Actually the mix was the result of combining earlier Ellen White materials which independently used different sources. Because of the different ways in which the earlier materials were written we have some subunits following the outline of a source and some sections combining sources. It is clear that in most cases Ellen White used one source in writing on a topic and in doing so she usually followed the thematic outline of the source. A good example of this can be found in her use of Hanna to add the section on the bestowal of the Holy Spirit to the account of the upper room encounters of Jesus with His disciples as given in chapter 84.

Question #14. Are the pre-DA texts dependent on sources for their thematic arrangement? In this question we raise question 13 for the content of the earlier writings. Here, however, we do not have to separate the chapter from its subunits. The pre-DA writings are for the most part manuscripts and articles on a given topic insofar as the

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life of Christ is involved. At least they do not exist as chapters of a book, as is the DA text.

Answer. As indicated in the answer to question 13 above and also in our elaboration of question 14, the earlier writings do not always limit themselves to one source or to one topic on the life of Christ. Ellen White's original writings as found in her diary or journal entries seem to follow no particular theme. Often her comments will open with a theme but soon will become rather "free floating." No doubt her frequent interruptions contributed to this sense of disconnectedness found sometimes in her materials. Apparently she often put down her impressions as they came to mind and/or used sources as she came across ideas she valued. She had assistants who could piece together articles, and in some instances manuscripts, from these jottings.

The answers for question 14 on the summaries vary, therefore, according to the nature of the earlier texts. Where no prior source is used to any major extent, such as in chapters 56 and 72, the answer is no. Where the earlier texts follow the Scriptural outline as in chapter 37 the answer is also no. But where the earlier document stays on one of the topics found in one of our chapters, and where the earlier document limited itself to one source, Ellen White usually also followed the thematic development of the source. She did not dip into the source for an occasional

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sentence. Her sentences usually reflect the ongoing sentence arrangement of the source though she may be more concise than the source in certain places and extend the comment far beyond the source in another instance. And finally, where the earlier texts are partly on the topic of the DA chapter and partly independent, following Scripture, or using more than one source, we must also answer "partly" or limit our "yes" to some sections only, rather than to the entire earlier document.

We have attempted a summary of the 14 summary questions which are rather specific in their concern. These questions helped us keep the research focused and kept our feet to the fire in gathering the data which would permit us to draw some general conclusions. Had we developed the questions after making a preliminary survey of the research on the 15 chapters perhaps some questions would have been presented in a different manner and other questions would have been added. At any rate these questions and their answers have brought us to the place where we are entitled to draw some conclusions from our study, conclusions which if not applicable to the entire text of The Desire of Ages at least are appropriate for the 15 chapters which have been the subject of this investigation.



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### GENERAL CONCLUSION

The conclusions which follow are limited to the scope of the research project as outlined in the Introduction, especially Part A. In view of the length of this study, many readers may be tempted to bypass the introduction and the analysis, choosing rather to check the "bottom line" only. In the interest of these readers a few words of background and caution may be in order. We suggest the readers consult the introduction of this study for a more complete treatment of these concerns.

It has not been possible to answer all the questions which have been raised in connection with Ellen White's use of sources. Our study has been limited to 15 chapters of the text of The Desire of Ages, which randomly selected chapters represent the whole text of 87 chapters. Our main interest has been to discover the nature and scope of literary borrowing in these 15 chapters

We have some idea of Mrs. White's dependency on sources when writing The Great Controversy. The latest editions of that work now list the sources of her quotations. Quite a few of her comments there refer to events of history. Many Adventists were not surprised to find that Ellen White used sources to provide historical background to visions that were usually limited to panoramic surveys of significant events in the history of the great controversy.

What intrigued even more Adventists was the question of

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source dependency in Ellen White's devotional and theological writings, particularly in the Desire of Ages, no doubt the most popular Ellen White book among Seventh-day Adventists. For this reason, when time and research assistance did not permit the investigation of Ellen White's complete writings on the life of Christ, nor even the full text of The Desire of Ages, 15 chapters were selected at random from a list of the 87 chapters which had been ordered with respect to length of the text. Out of each three lists, the 29 longest chapters, the 29 middle-length, and 29 shortest, 5 chapters were randomly selected, and these three groups of 5 chapters furnished the 15 chapters for our investigation.

This study on the use of sources did not include an investigation into the origin of Mrs. White's ideas. While thoughts are expressed through words, the use of the words of another writer does not necessarily imply that the writer who furnished the words also provided the thoughts. Any number of writers can express the same thought in different verbal expressions, as a comparative study of the numerous "lives" of Christ clearly shows. In order to evaluate the dependency of Ellen White's thoughts on the ideas of others, we would have to examine her works in terms of the ideas they express, and we would also have to study the writings and sermons of her associates who would have had the opportunity to influence her thinking, as well as an almost

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unlimited number of works of contemporary authors who were not a part of Ellen White's circle of acquaintances.

Another question not addressed in this source study is the issue as to whether Mrs. White used sources in recounting her visions or in her comments following her "I was shown" statements. In the 15 chapters of this project there is no mention of "vision" as a source. Apart from the earliest account in Spiritual Gifts, which to our knowledge is not dependent on sources when covering the episodes in the life of Christ corresponding to the 15 chapters of the DA text we reviewed, the expression "I was shown" is not used.

During the last six years many individuals have raised the question of Ellen White's inspiration and prophetic role. It is clear that for some the use of sources is incompatible with their understanding of prophetic ministry. This project was never designed to cover that theological and doctrinal question. For those readers who may be interested in the writer's position, particularly after he has completed the research project, a personal postscript follows this conclusion.

In the foregoing summary was presented compiled data and the summary of the conclusions to 14 questions addressed to each of the 15 chapters. These 14 questions were developed to assist us in our analysis of the 15 chapters. It was our hope that by applying the same set of

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questions to the study of each chapter we could achieve a higher degree of consistency in our investigation of diverse chapter content.

The conclusions which follow will consist of a series of numbered statements based upon the questions posed in the introduction to our study. There is no intended correspondence between the numbers of the statements of conclusions and the numbers relative to the summary questions addressed to each chapter. Usually these statements and the questions to which they speak are more broad in nature than the more specific analytical questions of the individual chapter summaries and the general summary above. At this juncture of our study we are interested in the general issues raised by those who sponsored the research project. Each statement, however, will be followed by supporting arguments based upon the evidence generated by the research and summarized earlier in this chapter.

This study is only one investigation into Ellen White's use of sources. Other efforts have been undertaken, and no doubt still more research on this issue will be made in the future. As with most research projects, the process of drawing conclusions on certain questions also raised additional issues which call for further study. To assist the church and its leaders and students in this ongoing study of Ellen White's writings, we will include several ideas for future projects as part of the conclusion. These

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problems will be listed in conjunction with the statement and/or evidence which has given rise to the suggestion in each case.

These suggestions for further research are not listed to lessen the impact of this study in any way. They are not offered to dilute the reasonableness of the arguments or to suggest that this research project is incomplete and therefore its conclusions are invalid. And they are definitely not set forth to frustrate the efforts one might face in coming to terms with Ellen White's use of sources or to add confusion to our understanding of Ellen White as a writer.

Before turning to the statements of conclusion a final word of caution seems appropriate.

The fundamental purpose of this project was to attempt a careful and thorough study of Ellen White as a writer, noting particularly how and to what extent she used literary sources in her writings on the life of Christ. Such a study demanded that I set forth the evidence as I found it, and that I admit what can be fairly concluded from that evidence and to indicate, furthermore, what still remains to be either studied, clarified, or solved. I have gone to great lengths to place the evidence and my analysis of that evidence before the reader. Obviously there is room, at least on certain points, for one to come to different conclusions. Hopefully those who may find serious cause for

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disagreement with the following conclusions will also do the church, fellow students of Ellen White, and myself the favor of suggesting their own viewpoints and how they arrived at their differing positions.

The conclusions which follow reflect the results of the entire research endeavor, not merely the answers given to the 14 questions summarized above. My summations involve interpretation of data, and subjectivity cannot be avoided. I have tried, however, to separate my opinion from what I think the evidence indicates to be a fact.

I have attempted to set forth the five statements of conclusion in as concise a manner as accuracy would allow. To properly understand the meaning and limits of the following statements, the accompanying explanatory material and supporting arguments should be carefully studied.

1. Ellen White used literary sources when writing The Desire of Ages.

As it stands this statement does not appear to say anything new. We knew the factuality of this claim before this project was ever undertaken. This basic conclusion is important, nevertheless, especially for what it does not say. In the first place it should be clearly noted that Ellen White, not her literary assistants, did the literary borrowing. My purpose is not to claim that her secretaries did not borrow. Their work was not the major focus of this study. We may someday find evidence that they also composed

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portions of the text on behalf of Ellen White and in so doing utilized the works of others without giving credit to their sources. What I intend to say with this statement is that there is clear evidence from Ellen White's personal handwriting that she herself composed textual materials on the life and Christ and that these handwritten materials noticeably show that she took literary expressions from the works of other authors without giving them credit as her sources.<sup>1</sup>

Few of these comments for which we have the handwritten text are to be found in the DA text in their original form, whether written in 1884 or in 1897. Marian Davis as Ellen White's "bookmaker" had the freedom both to reconstruct the text of Ellen White, selecting from the various articles, manuscripts, diary journal notes, and the earlier published Spirit of Prophecy, volumes II and III, and to edit the text of the DA. But there seems to be no compelling reason to lay the responsibility for the construction of the basic textual content and the use of literary sources involved in its composition on the shoulders of Marian Davis or any other of Ellen White's literary assistants.

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<sup>1</sup>I found no evidence to support Alice Gregg's claim that "Marian herself was clearly searching, studying, and selecting pertinent material not from Ellen's scrapbooks alone but from the works of other religious writers (Alfred Edersheim, William Hanna, John Harris, Daniel March, Henry Melvill, to name some) . . ." (Alice Gregg, "Marian the 'Bookmaker,' Adventist Currents, February, 1984, p. 23.)

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Secondly, it should be noted that this conclusion is not qualified by such expressions as "minimal borrowing," "wholesale borrowing," or some percentage estimate. All such qualifiers are in the first place relative and imprecise terms. Individuals who use these terms are often understood as either dismissing the fact of Ellen White's use of sources or stressing the unusual amount of borrowing. The effect of their approach, on the one hand, is that the hearer gets the impression that sources played an insignificant role in Ellen White's writings and for all practical purposes one can dismiss the issue of sources, and that her writings were basically independent of source influence. Albeit, on the other hand, when one speaks of "large-scale borrowing" the impression is left that Ellen White's work is no more than a compilation of the writings of others apart from a few connecting expressions.

The research indicates that Ellen White at times felt free to take verbatim expressions from the writings of others but that for the most part she paraphrased her sources. Generally the closer one is able to move back through the textual tradition to Ellen White's own hand, the greater is the degree of literary dependency. By the time Marian Davis is reworking the writings of Ellen White for the DA text the literary dependency is much less apparent. Since the basis of our comparison was the literary expression, once we determined Marian Davis had modified the



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literary form we no longer could claim we were necessarily working with Ellen White's literary hand. For this reason it would not have been a fair assessment had we limited the evaluation of Ellen White's use of sources to the analysis of the DA text. At the same time, the analysis of the earlier writings of Ellen White was only partial. We looked mainly at the material exhibiting some dependency, and only recorded the sentences which showed greater dependence than those of the DA text. We gave scant attention to sentences which appeared to have literary independence. Therefore even though the dependency rate of the earlier texts is generally greater than the rate found for the DA text, I would not be making a fair evaluation of Ellen White's dependency to overemphasize the greater frequency of the verbatim expressions noted in the earlier materials. Many sentences exhibited the same dependency as the DA text and for that reason were omitted from the text presentation.

My findings point to the need for further study if we want to establish more precisely the degree of literary dependency for Ellen White's writings. One such investigation might well take a serious look at Ellen White's handwritten materials or at typewritten texts which are known to represent Ellen White's work and are unedited apart from obvious spelling and punctuation corrections. Each Ellen White text should be treated as a whole and fully evaluated for both dependency and independency. The texts

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could be identified as to content and then their evaluations of dependency/non-dependency compared. Then and only then, would we be in a position to establish a general dependency level for Ellen White's writings. Once such a study of several independent documents and published articles has been made, a second inquiry could be launched comparing Ellen White's use of sources with that of her contemporaries. This comparative analysis would enable us to make a fair statement regarding charges that Ellen White was guilty of plagiarism.<sup>1</sup>

A very serious question that still remains regarding Ellen White's use of sources is the concern over her non-admission or even denial of dependency, whether implicit or explicit. How do we square her statements, and similar

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<sup>1</sup>The report of Attorney Vincent L. Ramik of the law firm of Diller, Ramik and Wight of Washington, D.C., August 14, 1981, concluded that "Ellen G. White was not a plagiarist and her works did not constitute copyright infringement/privacy." (pp. 26, 27). This conclusion was based upon a review of the literary dependency found in The Great Controversy, The Desire of Ages, and Sketches From the Life of Paul. Furthermore, Mr. Ramik was concerned with copyright infringement and with the legality of Ellen White's literary borrowing. (See the ADVENTIST REVIEW, Sept. 17, 1981, for more complete statement on the Ramik study.) Legal questions have their place but there are also ethical considerations of honesty and integrity. These issues relate not only to Ellen White and her published books but also to her manuscripts and articles which she published and which others have later published in her name. The plagiarism question has to be studied in terms of the literary conventions of her time and place and must include her writings in their unpublished as well as published form. Now that we know more about her use of sources in the production of her manuscripts, the ethical questions must also be addressed to those who publish her writings in compilations or in separate journal articles.

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ones made by her associates, with the textual evidence?<sup>1</sup> Any attempt to address this problem of incongruency should include a serious study of Ellen White's self-understanding of inspiration and her prophetic role in the context of nineteenth century views on inspiration, especially within Adventism.

The investigation also suggests that it would be helpful to take an in-depth look at the work of Ellen White's literary helpers. One might make a comparison of Ellen White's description of their work with the statements of the assistants and with the evidence we have of how they modified Ellen White's manuscripts. It might even prove useful to make a stylistic comparison between Ellen White and her assistants, particularly Marian Davis. Such a study might help us in our efforts to give proper credit to both Ellen White and Marian Davis for the production of The Desire of Ages.

2. The content of Ellen White's commentary on the life and ministry of Christ, The Desire of Ages, is for the most part derived rather than original.

This conclusion, as it reads, might appear to some readers as being unwarranted, even unjustified by the evidence, and rather demeaning. Hopefully, as further discussion is provided, it will be understood to be an

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Introduction, Part A, pages 30, 31, and Part B, pages 139, 140, and 147-150.

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accurate and concise statement of a fair judgment.

In an ultimate spiritual sense Ellen White has always insisted that her works were derivative. Both Spiritual Gifts, where she first comments on the life of Christ, and the later extended commentary on the great controversy, Spirit of Prophecy, open with an introductory chapter on the gift of prophecy. Ellen White, her publishers, and her readers in the Adventist Church viewed her writings as stemming from her prophetic role as a messenger of God. Her first words in her earliest treatment of the life of Christ are, "Then I was carried down to the time when Jesus was to take upon himself man's nature, . . ." In the paragraphs following we read such expressions as "I was pointed down to the last days"; "I saw"; "I was then shown"; "I then viewed Jesus in the garden . . . "; and "I was informed." The most frequent expression is "I saw."<sup>1</sup> The fact that Spirit of Prophecy omitted these expressions is no indication that she or Adventists had changed their positions.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from these passages and from her statements on the nature of her writings that Ellen White understood the content of her writings to have been derived from the Lord. The following statement specifically refers to her testimonies, even though Ellen White viewed the origin of all her messages from God as equally inspired.

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<sup>1</sup>Spiritual Gifts, Vol. I, pp. 28-79.

<sup>2</sup>There are a few exceptions. For an example note "I was then carried back to the creation, and was shown. . . ," Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. I, p. 85.

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You know how the Lord has manifested Himself through the spirit of prophecy. Past, present, and future have passed before me. . . . I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Ellen White's claim for the heavenly origin of her content is at the crux of the source problem. In the course of our research many have asked the question, "How are we to understand what she meant by such expressions when it is so obvious that she used contemporary sources written by authors who did not claim such heavenly origins for their work?"<sup>2</sup>

The DA text may be viewed as derived in a second sense. The basic source of information is the Bible, particularly the Gospels. A footnote at the beginning of nearly every chapter gives the passages of Scripture that the "chapter is based on." In view of the general readership anticipated for the DA, every attempt was made to omit those elements which are not discussed in Scripture.

Since these books are sent out without explanation as to the authority by which the author speaks, it was thought best to avoid, as far as we could, statements for which the Bible seems to furnish no proof, or which to the ordinary reader appear to contradict the Bible. . . .<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pp. 64, 65.

<sup>2</sup>This question is not a part of this study. The office of the Ellen G. White Estate has a number of helpful monographs on this subject. Several publications by the Ellen G. White Estate have been listed in the introduction and in the bibliography of this report.

<sup>3</sup>Marian Davis to J. E. White, Dec. 22, 1895. (Cited in "The Desire of Ages," Ellen G. White Estate Document, May 23, 1979, p. 30.)

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With respect to the Scriptures, Ellen White is no more or less derivative than are a number of the writers from whom she borrowed. I shall have more to say about the content and style of Ellen White's literary sources.

The most obvious meaning of this second conclusion, however, clearly suggests that the content of these chapters of the DA text does not provide insights and information not already available in earlier commentaries on the life of Christ. The statement should not be read as a denial that Ellen White received, by divine inspiration, the same ideas that she found in the sources she used, and therefore only used the literary sources for what they could provide as a way to express these ideas. Without a record of the content of her impressions and/or visions in the night seasons or at other times there is no way to verify or to falsify that claim. The point of the conclusion relates to the often raised question, "What is unique or different about the content of Ellen White's commentary from that of the sources to which she obviously referred?" A similar question asks: "What difference do you note between the content of an independent sentence and that of a dependent sentence?"

As indicated in the introduction to this report, at the outset of this project we already knew that the DA contained literary parallels from the works of William Hanna, Daniel March, John Harris, Frederic Farrar, and possibly Alfred Edersheim and several others. We did not know the extent these authors were represented in the DA nor how many others

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might have contributed to its content. The search for possible sources led us to over 500 works, most of which were on the life of Christ. We found literary parallels to the 15 selected chapters of the DA text in 32 works by 28 authors, though we found similar content in many more "lives" of Christ. Of the 15 chapters only one, chapter 56, was found to be virtually without a single parallel. Chapter 13 contained 8 parallels (second least found) if we discount pre-DA materials on the same content.

We have emphasized all along that the project was primarily directed toward literary rather than content analysis. Even so it is not possible to separate entirely the questions of form from those of content. Indeed, as several of the summary questions clearly indicate, we have dealt with content, albeit not in depth or conclusively. So while we found a good number of literary parallels between the comments of Ellen White and those of her sources, particularly in the earlier materials, the resemblance between the DA text and the source texts is all the more striking when one looks at the content. While Ellen White was often given credit for independent literary construction when the thoughts being expressed were basically the same as those of the authors she was obviously using, we also noted a larger degree of agreement between the sources themselves on the level of content than in terms of literary expression.

It is very possible that by not concentrating on the

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content alone we missed some significant differences in content between the DA and the sources we know she used. On the other hand, were we to treat the question of content seriously, we would have to add many texts to our survey, including the writings of Ellen White's contemporaries in Adventism.

We did not find much similarity between the content of chapter 56, "Blessing the Children," and the lives of Christ we surveyed. There are many valuable insights in this chapter on motherhood, fatherhood, and the family. It may be that here we have some unique content. But at least three factors argue against using the content of this chapter to establish the original nature of Ellen White's commentary on the life of Christ--the special nature of the subject material, the fact that this chapter is the second shortest chapter of the 15, and our inability for want of time to search the literature which would most likely have covered the topic of family and parental attitudes toward children. We did, however, credit the literary composition of chapter 56 to Ellen White's independence.

In the summary we pointed out that 61.4 percent of the individual sentences were rated independent, and 31.4 percent involved literary dependency at the paraphrase level. On the basis of these figures it might be assumed that conclusion statement number two is invalid. But when you add to the literary dependence the similarity of ideas, particularly with reference to the events in the life of



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Jesus, and the way in which the arrangement of the subunits of the chapters reflect the same thematic development as found in the sources, it becomes apparent that Ellen White is more dependent on her sources than the actual verbal parallels indicate. The nature and extent of Ellen White's literary dependency is also discussed under conclusion statement four below. It is of course very possible that a more careful scrutiny of the text would reveal additional subtle differences than at first meet the eye.

The practical intention of this conclusion is to declare that one is not able to recognize any general category of content or catalog of ideas that are unique to Ellen White's comments in the DA text. We found source parallels in the theological, devotional, narrative, descriptive, and spiritual comments of Ellen White. The larger literary units, or what might be called the subunits of the chapter, were also in most instances constructed in a sequence of thought development very similar to that of another writer. Thus it is not only the content of the individual sentence that on the surface is not identifiable as unique to Ellen White. The structural arrangement of the sentences in certain and/or specific chapter divisions quite typically follows that of the respective source supplying some of the literary expressions.

Even though Marian Davis, and evidently also Ellen White, intended to omit items "for which the Bible seems to furnish no proof," a number of such statements were included

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in the DA text. In these obviously extrabiblical materials we also found literary parallels.

The references to the inner thoughts of Jesus, to the visit of the disciple John to Jesus during the forty days of temptation in the wilderness, to the details of Jesus' interview with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, His visit in their home, and the presence of their invisible Companion on their return to Jerusalem, all of which are not mentioned in Scripture, clearly reveal the influence of other writers. One cannot on the face of a given statement, regardless of the nature of its content, conclude that a similar statement reflecting the same basic thought cannot be found in an earlier source. A detail not found in the biblical text may not with certainty be attributed to Ellen White's visions or special insights of the Holy Spirit. Most of these details noted in the DA text were also found in the literature available to Ellen White. The one item we did not locate in any other writer we reviewed was the way in which Jesus entered the upper room after His resurrection. Only Ellen White described Jesus as invisibly entering at the time the two disciples gained entrance. It is very possible that we missed other isolated unique features of the DA text, but the evidence points to such special information as being the exception rather than the rule.

Before turning to the next conclusion, which attempts to address the special character of the Ellen White text, I

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would note some suggestions for further study. It is clear from our limited study of the content of the DA text that serious attention should be given to the thought of Ellen White. How do her writings and the basic thoughts they express compare with her 19th century contemporaries? What special theological or practical spiritual insights are unique to the writings of Ellen White? It is regrettable that we were not able to include in our study the two additional books Ellen White wrote on the ministry of Christ. Possibly the distinctive character of Ellen White's content is more obvious in such books as Christ's Object Lessons and Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing.

There is also the matter of the content of Ellen White's visions on the life of Christ. We have mentioned above how her earliest treatment of the life of Christ as found in Spiritual Gifts includes such comments as "I was shown," "I saw," and "I was carried down." What follows, however, is almost a paraphrase of the biblical text. We do not have nearly the amount of detail and commentary on the text or incident in the life of Jesus that we find in these later works which omit the references to vision. Does Ellen White leave us any record of what she saw and when, so that we may be able to identify the nature of the content of the visions independent of her commentary on the life of Christ which exhibits the use of sources? Can we show from a record of her visions that Ellen Wite had the content

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generally in mind prior to their expression in a document which reveals literary dependency?

The writings of Ellen White on the life of Christ are replete with expressions reflecting her confidence in the leading of the Holy Spirit. Her references to being aroused in the night seasons and to being impressed to write do not always include comment on a vision. Perhaps we need to look at the total picture. Are all her "revelatory" experiences to be accounted for by her "visions"? What did Ellen White mean when she spoke of "visions"? And what was the role of these visions in the overall prophetic experience of Ellen White?

Finally, regarding content, how do Ellen White's writings compare among themselves when viewed in chronological sequence? There appears to be a development or contrast in her writings over a period of time. If this clearly is the case, what is the nature of that development or difference? To what influences can such contrasts be attributed? We did notice that her comments on a given topic prior to 1888 differed to some degree in later years but we did not notice such a pattern apart from a general expansion of her comments. Actually much of her earlier remarks were carried over into the later DA text.

3. The special character of Ellen White's commentary is to be found in its practical use of Scripture and in its stress on spiritual realities and personal devotion.

The previous conclusion that Ellen White's writings,

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that is to say the 15 chapters of the DA, are for the most part derivative rather than original should not be understood as denying to these writings any originality, or as suggesting that Ellen White was slavishly dependent upon literary sources in writing down her thoughts. Even though at times she deeply recognized her lack of education and literary ability and depended to a great extent on her literary assistants, it is clear from her diaries that she could write and knew how to express her thoughts. Though she was not strong physically and had only minimal formal education, she was a person of great natural intelligence and through the years became widely read. Also she was a speaker of some renown. Over and over she demonstrates that she was able to take the essence of the source commentary and adapt it to her purposes.

The net result is that while the basic content of her thoughts can also usually be found in the sources she used, the finished product of her own hand (and/or that of her literary helpers) bore a special Ellen White character, flavor, or perhaps some would say "style." And while I think we must credit Marian Davis with the final drafting of the chapters, most of what I wish to say about the genius of Ellen White's own work can also be legitimately applied to her manuscripts and journal notations. The writings clearly demonstrate her ability to recognize the better literary construction of her helpers and of the sources from which she borrowed.

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This is not to say that at times she did not have great difficulty expressing herself. There are some passages in her original handwritten manuscripts which defy one's best efforts to understand them. Other portions are poorly composed. But typically her writings are readable and easily understood. To prepare them for publication usually required that they be finessed in matters of syntax, spelling, and punctuation. Having read most of her handwritten materials I feel sure that anyone aware of Ellen White's limited formal education would be surprised at the high level of readability, the clarity, and the literary force her original writings exhibit. Nevertheless, perhaps we should credit Marian Davis with the literary style and construction of the final DA text insofar as the beauty and clarity of expression, the syntactical, structural composition of the sentences, and the arrangement of the chapter content.

The point of this conclusion is to recognize Ellen White's role in her writings and to note what there is about these writings that "stamp" them as Ellen White's work. What is it that identifies them as hers apart from their literary style which in part is to be attributed to Marian Davis? I would argue that not one but several features together give Ellen White's writings their peculiar character.

In the first place Ellen White appears to approach Scriptures from a practical point of view. She does not

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attempt to approach them theologically or as a scholar, i.e., as a trained exegete. She takes their obvious, almost literal meaning and is not disturbed when Marian Davis or another suggests changes in order to bring her writings into harmony with the text of Scripture. And when the source she is consulting tries at length to harmonize the Gospel accounts or attempts to handle another technical problem, Ellen White blithely skips over these concerns and chooses one Gospel position, takes a solution one of the sources has worked out, or arranges the basic elements of the various accounts into a harmony which appeals to her, and moves on with her narrative as if there is no problem.

Another distinct character of Ellen White's work on the the life of Christ is the stress given to what for lack of a better term I have labeled "spiritual realities." Though not every chapter lends itself to this emphasis, often when a source makes a fleeting reference to God's activity or point of view, to the angels of heaven and their feelings, point of view or activity, or to Satan and his angels and their desires or activities, the DA text will go to some length in developing the theme. Ellen White seems to have had a great interest in the "other world," in the invisible and real world of the spiritual beings of the universe. When the text lent itself to speak of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, sometimes expressed in the sources as between God and Satan, Ellen White usually extends the

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discussion beyond that of the source.

Ellen White's concern over "reality" may also be noted in the lack of supposition and probability in her statements. When in reference to the life of Christ, His viewpoint, or that of His disciples, the source uses such expressions as "we can well imagine," "it may be supposed," or "no doubt," Ellen White will use a positive expression. Something did or did not happen. Somebody said or thought or did not say or think a given word or thought. Ellen White does not comment on all aspects of a given topic or event but what she does treat is handled with a reporter's style. That is to say her account reads as a factual record; nothing is supposed. Ellen White writes as if she is dealing with realities, whether on earth or beyond the world we see. The reader is not left to imagine anything except what it would have been like to have been in Palestine in the time of Jesus and to have faced the realities she is describing.

A more subtle way in which Ellen White stressed "spiritual realities" was in her use of illustrations and language. She refused to use pictures which in her judgment would distort a realistic portrayal.<sup>1</sup> Ellen white was also very careful not to be carried away in the attempt to

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<sup>1</sup>In a letter "To Those in Responsible Positions in our Publishing Houses" she wrote the following note on January 9, 1897: "I am troubled in regard to the use of pictures in our publications. Some of our papers seem bent on using them in season and out of season. And some of the cuts used



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present a literary text. Whenever her sources used hyperbolic statements, embellished the text with obvious literary expressions, or left the main point to develop some interesting sidelight or curiosity, Ellen White bypassed their comment and stayed with the main storyline and with the essential elements of the background and characterizations. The reader of the DA is hardly ever conscious of the text itself or impressed with the literary skill of the author. One is caught up with the narrative and its meaning and appeal. This cannot always be said of the sources she used.

Finally, the fingerprint of Ellen White may be found in the devotional, moral, or Christian appeals or lessons which may be expected anywhere in the chapter, but are often placed at the end. We find such entreaty and moralizing in Hanna and in March, as well as in other sources reflected in the text of DA, but nowhere to the extent found in Ellen

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are very inferior, and poorly illustrate the subjects represented." Speaking of the illustrations selected by the publishers for Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing she calls them "miserable representations" that "do such injustice to the subject."

The cuts in Gospel Reader also displeased Ellen White. She objected to a picture of Moses which "is not in any sense a correct representation of Moses. It looks more like a picture of the great deceiver, Satan, after he had lost paradise." The illustration of the cherubim on the ark was unacceptable on two counts. The heavenly angels were such that "a child might take the representation as a bird hunched up." But perhaps the most important reason for Ellen White's objection was because "the sacred ark, which represented Jehovah amid his people, was always covered, that no curious eye might look upon it. Let it ever be covered." (EGW Letter 28a, 1897).

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White's text. It would seem that Ellen White is quite aware of her stress on the moral lessons to be learned from the teachings of Christ and of one's need to respond in faith and obedience to God. In one of her letters to her children Ellen White makes reference to Marian Davis' suggestions on improving some articles, and she writes, "I think I can make the articles specified more full, and as I am famous for moralizing, this will be no cross."<sup>1</sup> We should not forget that Ellen White's main objective for revising her earlier work on the life of Christ was to prepare a work to be sold by colporteurs in the interest of bringing people to Jesus Christ.

The sections of the narrative where the work of God, of the angels, or of Satan and his angels, are described; where the great controversy motif is discussed; and passages where moralizing or devotional appeals occur are more likely to contain Ellen White's independent comment than the narrative, historical, or biblical portions of the text. Having said this we should not conclude that Ellen White did not use sources in writing on such topics, or that her thoughts in these areas are different from what may be found in other writers of the period. The general theme of Ellen White's remarks will usually be found in one of the sources. But the way the theme is developed, its length, and its placement in the chapter's context, are generally unique to Ellen White.

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<sup>1</sup>EGW Letter W-38-1885.

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The fact that we often found independent material in Ellen White's devotional or moralizing commentary may also be due to our inability to review contemporary sermons and devotional works. For example, there is great similarity between the devotional comments of Ellen White in Steps to Christ and the thoughts of Andrew Murray, a famous 19th century preacher. A number of people suggested that our research include these devotional writers in our search for literary parallels. To have gone this route would have led us into a whole new type of literature including the study of sermons.<sup>1</sup>

Even though I would argue that Ellen White's independent sentences are more likely to be found in the sections where these types of content appear, it should not be taken for granted that any one sentence of this nature is strictly original with Ellen White. While her literary sources do not stress these concerns to the extent she does, they do make similar comments, and therefore one cannot be certain that a given sentence in Ellen White is not to some degree reflecting a literary source parallel.

In my judgment the notice of special doctrinal issues in presenting the life and teachings of Jesus would be characteristic of any Adventist writer and would not

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<sup>1</sup>We made a few cursory attempts to locate literary parallels in several books of sermons and in a number of works by Andrew Murray, but found little to encourage our continued efforts in view of our time constraints.

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identify the commentary as the work of Ellen White. It would be natural for any Adventist to stress the place of the Sabbath and the doctrine of the nonimmortality of the soul in the teachings and practice of Jesus.

I am convinced that the evidence provided by the larger context, the chapter as compared to a given sentence or literary subunit, gives some definition for identifying the special characteristics of Ellen White's comments on the life of Christ. Ellen White makes a contribution in her own right. There is no question that she used sources but she was selective. She evidently was governed by her own purposes and priorities. The sources were her slaves, never her masters.

To deny her indebtedness to literary sources or to underplay their influence would in my judgment not be a fair assessment of the evidence, as I tried to point out under the second conclusion. But to stress the literary borrowing to such an extent that Ellen White's special contributions as a writer and as a messenger, for the content she wished to communicate, are severely downplayed or denied, is also in my opinion an inaccurate evaluation of the evidence.

This is not to say there are no further problems to consider in respect to Ellen White's use of sources, particularly in regard to their influence on the content of her writings. We need further study to bring into sharper definition how Ellen White's comments differ from or reflect

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those of her sources. The comparative studies should also be extended to cover devotional and theological content. The theologians in the church will want to study the implications of Ellen White's use of sources on the church's claim for her inspiration. Of course, as we mentioned earlier, such an investigation must also somewhere along the line treat the charges that Ellen White denied she engaged in the kind of literary borrowing this study and others indicate took place.

No doubt a thorough look at Ellen White's use of Scripture would also prove helpful. What role do the Scriptures play in the DA text? Is there more than one way to approach Scripture? Should we always be concerned with the academic or scholarly issues? If not always, do the technical problems of Scripture at some point have a legitimate place in the life of the church? Should Ellen White's writings control Adventist interpretation of Scripture?

4. Ellen White used a minimum of 23 sources of various types of literature, including fiction, in her writings on the life of Christ.

Earlier in our summary statement we mentioned that 28 writers and 32 sources were used in composing the 15 chapters of the DA on the life of Christ. These figures include the sources for the pre-DA text. In this conclusion I am taking a more conservative stance since several of the sources listed in the summary provided only one or two

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parallels according to my reckoning. The total of 23 sources includes only those books which have furnished at least 5 parallels for a given chapter.

Our concern here is not to minimize the number of sources Ellen White used in writing on the life of Christ. For if our conclusion is correct that Ellen White often concentrated her use of a particular source in a specific chapter, it is quite reasonable to project that in the 62 remaining chapters of the DA and in the two books on the life and teachings of Christ not reviewed, i.e., Mount of Blessing and Christ's Object Lessons, she used several additional sources.<sup>1</sup> At the same time one would not be justified in concluding that based on this average of one and one-half sources per chapter reviewed we can expect to find Ellen White used about 130 literary works in producing the 87 chapters of DA.

The point of this conclusion is not to set forth the degree of Ellen White's dependency, though some statistics have been included below. The issue here is the nature of the sources and how they influenced the DA text.

William Hanna's work on the life of Christ was used in the writing of 13 of the 15 chapters. Two books by Daniel March were used in 4 chapters, and John Harris was clearly used in another two chapters. The other sources are concentrated each largely in one chapter respectively. Just

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<sup>1</sup>For example, Charles Beecher's Redeemer and Redeemed (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1864), p. 65, is quoted in DA, p. 25.

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how Ellen White went about choosing her sources and selecting which ones to use for any given chapter is a matter of conjecture. It is not difficult to imagine that Hanna's life of Christ would have been particularly attractive to Ellen White given her purposes in writing DA. According to Daniel Pals, "Hanna designed his work along practical and devotional lines."<sup>1</sup> Hanna had taken a trip to Palestine in an effort to capture the local color, geography, and setting for his portrayal of the life of Jesus. His earliest writings on the life of Christ were developed from his Edinburgh sermons and he had a special ability to mix "antiquarian romance and solid theological orthodoxy."<sup>2</sup> All of this, the historical realism, the devotional emphasis, the orthodox viewpoints on the divinity of Christ, and the trustworthiness of the Gospel accounts, would have provided Ellen White with an ideal source.

It is rather unlikely that Ellen White would have fortuitously chosen a particular work to use for every chapter. It is perhaps unrealistic to hold that Ellen White would have reviewed source after source looking for the right one to use in commenting on the topic at hand. Judging from the way her journals read it is more likely that Ellen White reviewed these and other unknown sources

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel L. Pals, The Victorian "Lives" of Jesus (San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University Press, 1982), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 70, 71.

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one at a time and made jottings on their content or took from them what she wanted regardless of the topic. At times what she took combined with her own comments would make an article for one of the church journals. The notes on the various topics would have been preserved in her journals and later gathered and compiled by Marian Davis into various scrapbooks. Where there was a specific area to be covered she probably returned to those sources with which she was most familiar, such as Hanna, March, or Farrar. However she did it, Ellen White must have been a voracious reader.

This brings us to another point that should not be overlooked when evaluating the literary work of Ellen White. Earlier we described the nature of her independent comment and also spoke of her contribution as a writer. What needs to be recognized in addition to her independent commentary is the selectivity represented in the many decisions she must have made not to use material from her sources. It is only when we consider the amount of text she perused and the innumerable opportunities she had for borrowing from these works that we are able to recognize this aspect of her independence as a writer. Her work of selecting, condensing, paraphrasing, deleting, adding, and rearranging in the production of her manuscripts is difficult to evaluate. Nevertheless, a fair assessment of Ellen White as a writer must take this creative activity into consideration.



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The sources represented in the text of DA that we surveyed are not all of the same literary genre. Most of the works referred to were lives of Christ. The writings of Bennett, Hanna, Edersheim, Farrar, Fleetwood, Geikie, and Jones fall into this popular category. Samuel Andrews' life of Christ was apparently used to establish the chronology of the narrative of The Desire of Ages. Andrews included in his work a harmony of the Gospels which was used by many writers of the period. A brief biographical sketch of the authors of the major works used in the DA text reviewed in this study appears in Appendix E of this report.

In addition to these "lives" of Jesus, Ellen White used a devotional work by J. R. Miller, Bible Lessons by George Pentecost, sermons by Henry Melvill, a Gospel commentary by John Cumming, essays on selected themes relevant to viewing Jesus as The Great Teacher taken from the Gospels by John Harris, essays on the the glory of Jesus as revealed in the prophetic expectations of the Old Testament, in the incarnation, in the resurrection, and in His ascension by Octavius Winslow (The Glory of the Redeemer in His Person and Work), and two books by Daniel March which focus on the places Jesus visited (Walks and Homes of Jesus) or on episodes recounted in Scripture which happened at night (Night Scenes of the Bible).

Perhaps the most interesting work from the point of view, style and genre, was the work by J. H. Ingraham.

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His work falls into a popular category. The typical "lives" of the mid-19th century combined history, geography, and imagination in what may be called a "historical romance." These works do not even merit a mention in Albert Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Ingraham wrote his life of Jesus to prove the divinity of Christ. The scenes are "narrated as if by an eye-witness of them" and therefore the work is obviously fictional. The entire work is cast in the form of a collection of letters written by the daughter of a wealthy Jew living in Egypt who resides in Palestine during the time of Jesus' ministry.<sup>2</sup> Schweitzer refers to Ingraham's work, which had appeared in German translation, as one of the "'edifying' romances on the life of Jesus intended for family reading."<sup>3</sup>

Ellen White evidently read extensively in literature of her times. She found useful material in both fictional and non-fictional works as well as in works of differing literary type, theological perspective, and scholarly depth. This conclusion is supported by the evidence of this investigation and is corroborated by the contents of her personal libraries at Elmshaven, near St. Helena, California, her last home.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, translated by W. Montgomery from Von Reimarus zu Wrede, 1910 (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1910). It is possible that Schweitzer limited his review to works which were available to him in the German language.

<sup>2</sup>Ingraham, op. cit., pp. ix, x. (See text, p. 551.)

<sup>3</sup>Schweitzer, op. cit., p. 328, note 1.

<sup>4</sup>See Introduction, Part A, p. 57.

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Ellen White used these "lives" of Christ in various ways. So when it comes to the extent of literary dependency we must speak of various types and degrees. Dependence is evident in the use of chapter titles, in the arrangement of the literary subunits of the chapters, and in the formation of individual sentences. In the subunits of the chapter and at times in the sequence of several subunits the DA commentary will often follow the narrative development of the source. The overall arrangement of the chapter, however, will usually follow Ellen White's or Marian Davis' independent construction. At times one can trace the similarity of compositional arrangement between the DA and a source to the Bible narrative which undergirds both accounts.

The compilation method of composing the DA text from multiple sources and from earlier Ellen White materials may have had some bearing on the duplication of content materials within the same chapter. This system of working for the most part with the revision of earlier texts evidently contributed to the enlarged DA text and to the necessity of bringing out two additional volumes, Christ's Object Lessons and Mount of Blessing, to complete the commentary on the life of Christ. I found no evidence that the larger coverage was due to a greater use of the sources. The longer chapters and/or the additional chapters in the DA text may easily be accounted for on the basis of a larger treatment of the life of Christ. More incidents are

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included in the narrative, and Ellen White had written on many of these topics in journal articles produced after Volumes II and III of The Spirit of Prophecy, the earlier work upon which the DA text is based. The net effect of using this compilation technique often demanded that the resulting accumulation of material be reduced to manageable length for publication.

The degree of dependency registered for independent sentence units averaged out at the "Loose Paraphrase" level. The 2,624 sentences of the DA text included 1,612 "Strict Independence" sentences and 823 dependent sentences of various types. "Verbatim" was the evaluation for 29 of these dependent sentences. The pre-DA writings contained a greater ratio of verbatim sentences, 80 out of 1,180. I found it quite typical for the earlier writings and the later individual manuscripts of Ellen White's to exhibit a greater degree of literary dependency than the DA text. Once the various streams flow together to form the river of the DA text the original compositional form is no longer discernible and dependency is less obvious and harder to establish with certainty. For those looking for some percentage of dependency I think it is safe to say that about 31 percent of the DA text measured some degree of literary dependency and about 61 percent registered independence. The rest represents the use of Scripture.

Even though I have attempted an evaluation of Ellen White's literary dependency in respect to verbal parallels

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found in her sentence constructions and have also made some general judgments relative to the redaction or editorial arrangement of the content of the chapters in DA, I freely admit that these assessments are only generalizations. The conclusions in respect to dependency and independency are not as precise as the statistics might suggest. I would urge the reader to take the time to study the text presentations of each chapter and the additional materials in Appendix D. The contribution of this investigation is found primarily in the completeness of its textual base. By carefully comparing Ellen White's work with the sources one is able to note Ellen White's independence within dependent sentences and her dependence in sentences we have rated as independent. The entire chapter of the DA text may be compared with the larger context of the source text and the larger dimensions of the literary dependency questions can then be addressed. Once one has personally studied the texts themselves the statistical evaluations will be seen as indicators of trends or of proportionate dependency/independency ratings and not as precise and accurate evaluations.

It may be surprising for many to discover that Ellen White was so broad in her reading selections. Evidently the early Advent believers were encouraged to read widely in the area of religion. Elder William C. White, one of Ellen White's sons and close collaborator in the production of her books, included one of Ellen White's literary sources in his

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book promotions. In a letter dated six years before the publication of DA he wrote:

You will notice in recent numbers of the ECHO [Australian version of The Signs of the Times] that we have begun to advertise some reference books and some juvenile books. Most of these I am personally acquainted with. Many of them are works that we have handled for years in America and sold large numbers. I am sure that it will be greatly to the advantage of our people, if in connection with their Sabbath-school studies they will read such works as Geikie's Life of Christ and Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul.<sup>1</sup>

The time constraints on this research project did not permit us to examine the letterbooks of W. C. White for information on Ellen White's use of sources and literary assistants. We do have several of his comments on these topics which have been collected and published by members of the Ellen G. White Estate office.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it would be useful to make a thorough study of all such references, particularly in respect to the reading selections, in the letters of Adventist pioneers, in the advertisements of the various church journals, and in the articles appearing in Adventist papers authored by Christians of other faiths. Once we are able to contextualize Ellen White's reading habits we will be in a position to say whether her practice of reading from such diverse sources was different from that followed by James White in his editorial activities or by other Adventist writers of the time.

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<sup>1</sup>WCW Letter to Mrs. M. H. Tuxford, December 8, 1892.

<sup>2</sup>These publications are described in the introduction of this report.

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5. Ellen White's literary assistants, particularly Marian Davis, are responsible for the published form of The Desire of Ages.

The role of Ellen White's literary secretaries was never the primary focus of this investigation. Their activities, however, cannot be entirely divorced from a study of Ellen White's use of sources. In Part B of the introduction to this study we reviewed the general nature of their work, particularly in respect to the editing and publishing of The Desire of Ages. The research into Ellen White's use of sources confirmed that while no complete division of labor existed between Ellen White's work and that of her secretaries, there was a practical separation of writing responsibilities.

We know that Ellen White wrote the initial stage of the text in the form of handwritten notations in her journals. She provided the original form of the text using various sources and/or developing her comments from her own thoughts, reflections, and Bible study. Without specific information which she alone could supply we have no way of knowing what materials came from visions or through other sources of inspiration available to her. Once these thoughts were put on paper they were handed to her literary assistants for editing and, in the case of the DA text, for compilation into chapters for book publication.

Our research indicates that once the handwritten text

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came into the hands of the secretaries and literary assistants they evidently had the freedom to rearrange word and sentence order as well as to add and omit words or short phrases. The basic content usually remained the same. We did not find one DA chapter in handwritten form though some late manuscripts did contain the basic text of what later came to be large portions of a chapter. This evidence suggests to me that her literary helpers had the task of making up the chapters from the various manuscripts Ellen White wrote. We found that Marian Davis rearranged paragraphs, modified sentence and chapter length, and generally followed through with the many details involved in getting a book to press.

An overlap in responsibilities took place when Marian made suggestions to Ellen White on what was needed to round out a chapter or incident and when Ellen White checked the finished text once it had been compiled and edited by Marian Davis. Often others joined Ellen White for the final approval.

Ellen White considered helpers like Marian Davis her "bookmakers." When Marian Davis is experiencing some difficulties Ellen White is no longer able to say, "Here, Marian, is a book I will put in your hands to arrange."<sup>1</sup> Ellen White freely admits since "you (Marian) have been severely taxed in preparing the work Desire of Ages, we

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<sup>1</sup>EGW Let. D-248, dated October 20, 1899.



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would plan for you to let go of all this kind of work in preparation of books. I shall feel this laying down of the work more than any other one can possibly feel it."<sup>1</sup> This "work" involved much more than correcting syntax and grammar. When Sarah Peck, a trained educator, arrived in Australia to assist Ellen White she complained that there was no one to teach her her job. In a private letter to W. C. White, Ellen White wrote, "She says she cannot see why she was sent for to come here from Africa to help me, with no one to instruct her, to educate her in the work."<sup>2</sup>

When the manuscripts as they came from the hand of Ellen White are compared with the finished DA text it becomes clear that Ellen White is heavily dependent upon these special assistants. She is confident about her speaking ability but one never finds that confidence expressed in her comments on her writing skills.<sup>3</sup> It does seem reasonable to conclude that more credit should be given to these special assistants when referring to Ellen White as an author of published works.

No doubt a more accurate estimation of Ellen White as a writer demands a careful analysis of her manuscripts. A serious study of her handwritten text of a complete manuscript would reveal more about how she structured her

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>EGW Let. W-198, dated March 9, 1900.

<sup>3</sup>One example may be found in a letter to her children where she speaks about her sister, their aunt. "She is a powerful singer. This is as much her talent as speaking is mine. I think I never heard a voice that would thrill the soul like hers." Letter W-10-72.

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thoughts, expressed her views, and utilized sources. A project of this kind might also shed some light on the authorship of some of Ellen White's manuscripts which carry no written signature of Ellen White, consist largely of excerpts from Ellen White's earlier writings, and exist today only in typewritten form with no indication of being a copy of an Ellen White handwritten manuscript. It may be that Ellen White authorized her helpers to develop manuscripts on certain topics from her earlier writings even as she allowed them to use her materials to construct journal articles and book chapters. We might also be able to tell if the manuscripts of 1897 were pre-DA writings or intended as rough drafts of the DA text.

Finally, some attention needs to be given to the foreign language editions of Ellen White's works. Our study of the French edition of Ellen White's life of Christ raised several questions relating to the work of translators or editors. Our comparison of the relevant chapters of the French text with the earlier Spirit of Prophecy volumes indicated that it was basically a direct translation. There were, however, revisions made to the earlier text and new material added, some of which was heavily dependent on literary sources. Was the entire work meant to be a translation, a revision, or both? Was the new commentary a translation of Ellen White's manuscripts written in English by her while in Europe but not preserved for use in the later English version?

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We have at last come to the end of a very long and involved research project on a selected portion of Ellen White's writings on the life of Christ. In the process we have also raised additional questions for future investigations. I think the study has clearly revealed that Ellen White's writings on the life of Christ, at least in respect to these 15 chapters of The Desire of Ages, were both original and derivative. No doubt continued investigations will turn up additional sources and literary parallels. If we can judge by the findings of this research, however, all such future study will also reveal more about the creative role of Ellen White as a writer. She, with the aid of her literary assistants, built out of the common quarry of stones not a replica of another's work but rather a customized literary composition which reflects the particular faith and Christian hope she was called to share with her fellow Adventists and the Christian community at large. It is perhaps more accurate to speak of her creative and independent use of her own writings and that of others than to minimize the amount of her borrowing. It is the finished product, whether sentence, paragraph, chapter, or book, that should be compared in the final analysis. A reading of the full report will readily reveal that the multiple aspects of literary dependence or independence are often too subtle, too intertwined and too complex to be precisely and consistently evaluated.

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### Postscript

In October of 1980, soon after I accepted the responsibility for conducting this research into Ellen White's use of sources, I was advised to back out of my commitment. The project was described as a "no win" situation. There was no way, so I was told, that I could please both the General Conference administrators who had commissioned the study and those in the church who were raising the questions about Ellen White's writing methods. As I now draw the project to a close I am no closer than I was then to knowing whether my "prophet" friend was correct in his prediction. We will just have to wait and see. After nearly eight years with the project, however, I remain confident that the evidence will speak for itself. Truth is at stake here. It is not a matter of winning or losing.

We must also remember this project is not the only study on Ellen White which has been made in the past several years. Many have contributed to the current Adventist understanding of Ellen White and her writings and they will continue to shape the future role of Ellen White's ministry in Adventism. This investigation did not address all the questions being raised in respect to Ellen White, her ministry, and her writings. Indeed, the study raised additional issues which should be taken up in future studies. There are, however, several questions which have been addressed to me personally many times over the past few

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years. Since four of these questions have to do with personal perspectives relative to this research project, perhaps this is the appropriate place to answer them.

Church members have been curious as to why I have been willing to give a major segment of time out of my life to the study of an academic problem about Ellen White. If the study had to do with church doctrine there would be no question, but why give this time to the issue of sources? My answer is as follows. In the first place the study is justified by the number of people interested. The interested ones are not only those asking the question but those who don't want to know the answer. These latter ones are interested in not knowing. The fact that so many "reports" have minimized the use of sources by Ellen White is evidence of this "negative" interest in the topic. No true faith in Ellen White and her writings can be persuasive if it cannot stand the light of truth. Our faith in Ellen White must rest upon evidence, not upon myth. I think it is very important for the future of Adventism and for Adventist confidence in the ministry of Ellen White that we base our beliefs on our best knowledge of the truth. Likewise, if there are those who find it hard to accept, or necessary to leave Adventism, I would prefer that they do so on the basis of a correct understanding of Adventism and not because they reject or have difficulty with misconceptions of Adventism.

There is also a professional basis for my interest in this project. My area is biblical interpretation and while

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many Adventists may not realize it, we are indebted to many such research studies by others in the past for our knowledge of the Bible, its text, its history, and its background. It is becoming increasingly necessary for us to obtain similar knowledge of the writings of Ellen White if we expect them to have continuing significance for the church today. Even though we are only 150 years away from the days of Ellen White, there has been a far greater increase of knowledge in these 15 decades than has taken place during the four thousand years from Abraham's day to that of Ellen White. It is imperative that we develop appropriate principles of interpretation for understanding and applying the truths to be found in the writings of Ellen White. These principles are developed from a knowledge of the text and not superimposed on the text. Hence we need studies such to this one to help us understand the text of Ellen White.

A second concern has to do with the charge by some that Ellen White was guilty of plagiarism. People want to know if the evidence of literary dependency uncovered by this study shows that charge to be a valid one.

Let me first point out that this research project did not treat the question of plagiarism. In fact, I have suggested under the first conclusion above that serious attention be given to this question. At this point my personal opinion is that such a study when concluded will show that Ellen White was not a plagiarist. My reasons for

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holding this opinion are as follows. There is no question in my mind that Ellen White used literary sources, even verbatim quotes, without giving credit to her sources. But the charge of plagiarism can only be legitimately placed against a writer when that writer's literary methods contravene the established practices of the general community of writers producing similar writings of the same literary genre within a comparable cultural context and time period.

In the course of our research in the "lives" of Jesus produced in the 19th century we often found similarities and even verbatim expressions among the sources used by Ellen White. There were times when we were uncertain as to which literary source the DA parallel was to be credited. The writers used by Ellen White often exhibited literary parallels among themselves equal to those found between the writings of Ellen White and these same writers.

My comments here are not intended to settle the question of plagiarism in respect to the Ellen White writings. They are also not included here to minimize the extent of her literary dependence. The point I do wish to make is that a careful study of the writings of Ellen White and any fair attempt to treat the plagiarism issue will also recognize Ellen White's creative work. Such an analysis will give due credit to Ellen White and to Marian Davis for their individuality which comes to expression in the processes of rejection, selection, paraphrasing, and

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rearrangement of the source text. It will take pains to emphasize the dissimilarities as well as the similarities. When the Ellen White writings are evaluated against the practices of other writers of this period and genre instead of against the expectations of those who put Ellen White as a writer in a special category, the question of plagiarism becomes a much more complicated issue.

Another question often raised in connection with the plagiarism issue has to do with Ellen White's denial of literary borrowing. Adventists have asked me how I personally solved the problem. Did I think the introductory statement to The Great Controversy constituted an adequate admission of literary dependence?

I must admit that I find The Great Controversy preface much too limited to answer for all of Ellen White's use of sources. The statement comes rather late in her history of writing; it is too narrow and perhaps too vague in its reference to historians and reformers; it minimizes the use of sources; and it does not cover her practice of paraphrasing her sources.

In my opinion we must first try to grasp how Ellen White understood her role as God's special messenger. What was her view of inspiration and revelation? What did her charismatic experience include or exclude? How would she probably have justified her literary practices to herself? What do we know about the extent of her visions, and how are



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we to interpret her descriptions of those many times when she was impressed to write yet makes no specific reference to having had a vision on the topic.

Her explanations and descriptions must not be held accountable to criteria we have developed from our experiences. Rather, they must be approached in a similar fashion to our attempts to understand the prophetic experiences of others, including the men and women spoken of in Scripture. In my view it would be as illegitimate to force Ellen White into our contemporary mold of expectations as it is for a strictly scientific view to demand that the miracles of Scripture be denied or explained on a cause-effect nexus modern man could accept. Until someone has made this kind of an investigation into the prophetic experiences of Ellen White, the questions over her admission or nonadmission of literary dependency should in my judgment be left open.

The fourth question relates to the subject of Ellen White's inspiration. Church members want to know if I believe that Ellen White was inspired of God, and some push the question further by asking me to explain what I mean by "inspiration." In view of the fact that I have been directing a research project involving the analysis of Ellen White's writings for the Adventist church I have never felt that this question was out of order. Of course the issue of "inspiration" is a theological question and it also happens to be a doctrine on which the church has never clearly

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defined its position. It is therefore not surprising to find that there is not a single orthodox Adventist view on inspiration. The net effect is that one's belief in the area of inspiration is quite personal. It is this personal nature of the question that permits me to be more positive in my answer.

I came to this study at the request of the officers of the General Conference. My background and training was in the language, text, interpretation, and theology of the New Testament. Along with nearly every other Adventist associate in biblical studies I was not troubled by the discoveries over Ellen White's use of sources.

Inspiration, to my way of thinking, is not dependent upon originality. It is clear that much of the material content of Scripture makes no claim to being new and different from what anyone else was saying or from what had been said by someone in the past. In fact, Luke 1:1-3 clearly states that what followed in the record of Jesus' life was taken from the oral or written accounts of others. Why should we expect something more or different in the experience of Ellen White?

Now, having been given the privilege of reading so much of her writings in handwritten, typescript, and published form, I find that my respect for and appreciation of her writings and ministry have grown. I covet for all her supporters and critics alike the opportunity to read her writings in their original context. To be able to freshly

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discover their breadth of interest and involvement, her judgment and devotion, her humor and humaneness, and her piety and spirituality, was both informative and faith building.

Obviously she was human, had personal and character weaknesses, and was far from perfect and infallible. She never claimed to be otherwise. In my judgment, the problems her interpreters face in giving the appropriate recognition to both the time-conditioned and timeless statements to be found in her writings, are no different from those the Jewish and Christian church have had to deal with throughout the history of God's revelatory activities.

I am under the strong conviction, now more than before I began this research project, that the issue is not one of deciding if Ellen White was a prophet or merely a religious leader. It is not a case of "either/or." Rather, it is an issue of "both/and." She was both a 19th-century prophetic voice in her ministry to the Adventist church and through that calling to the larger society, and a voice out of that Christian community of the past which still deserves to be heard today in those messages which speak to the issues still relevant in the latter part of the 20th century. Her writings also deserve to be preserved into the 21st century so that the church may continue to profit from her timeless counsel.

To my way of thinking, one sure way to destroy the continuing effectiveness of Ellen White's ministry is to

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take the either/or, the all or nothing, approach. She fought against such a view in her own lifetime. She would not permit her testimonies to be put in "concrete," to be taken out of the living context in which they were given and formulated into literal prescriptive statements that were to be understood and applied in the same way regardless of the life situation. Her words will only be preserved if they are allowed to speak dynamically under the continued power of the Holy Spirit and with the common-sense understanding God has given to mankind.

Let me repeat. The question is not one of deciding which of her writings were inspired and which portions were not. It is not a case of deciding when to exchange her "prophetic" hat for her "editorial" cap. It is rather one of deciding which comments of this "special messenger of the Lord" still address our world and the realities of our life situation which we cannot humanly escape and which the honest minds of the Christian community force us to accept as true for us today.

If there is one general conclusion generated from my countless hours spent in reading and studying her writings over the past seven years it is this. Ellen White was above all a practical believing Christian. Her writings were written to inform and to build personal faith in and personal obedience to God's will as it comes to expression in His Word, the Bible. We may wish with all our hearts that she could serve us today as scientist or psychologist,

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as technician or theologian, or as conference or college president, but that is not to be. My firm conviction is that she was not nor can be any one of these for us. She was rather a woman of God, driven by His Spirit to call us back to Himself, to His Word and His ways, that living under the name of Christ we might glorify Him before those who know Him not.