

# Statements Mistakenly Attributed to Ellen G. White

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The statements of well-known persons are often distorted, and frequently statements made by others are attributed to them. Almost from the beginning of the work of Ellen G. White, there have been statements incorrectly attributed to her, or materials deliberately or inadvertently garbled. One such case is described in *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 57. We can recognize as genuine only such Ellen G. White materials as can be traced to published or unpublished sources known to be authentic.

Listed here are items concerning which inquiries most frequently reach the Ellen G. White Estate. They are grouped according to the five most common types.

## *1. Testimonies Dependent Entirely Upon Memory*

The memory of even godly people may not be entirely reliable, hence background information for certain statements attributed to Ellen G. White may prove helpful:

**Sabbath Meal at Another Planet.** The report, based on the memory of one person, that Ellen G. White stated in a dinner-table conversation that the inhabitants of other worlds are gathering fruit for the Sabbath-day entertainment of the translated saints en route to heaven, is without support. The assertion that the words were stenographically reported also is without foundation. Ellen G. White makes only the simple statement in *Early Writings*, page 16, that "We were seven days ascending to the sea of glass." No mention is made by Ellen G. White of the Sabbath spent en route.

**Authorship of *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*.** The report of an early minister that Ellen G. White declared in his presence that she had seen an angel standing by the side of Elder Uriah Smith, inspiring him as he wrote *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*, is seriously undercut by the historical facts. It is contrary to authentic Ellen G. White statements that would remove Smith's book from the category of "inspired." However, Mrs. White esteemed this volume highly and freely recommended it. See *Colporteur Ministry*, page 123.

**Identity of Melchizedek.** Mrs. White reportedly identified Melchizedek as the Holy Spirit, according to the memory of one man. There is no support in her writings for this teaching, and the memory statement is offset by denials of others who were present when Ellen G. White is supposed to have made this statement. She did not identify Melchizedek. See Ellen

G. White statement in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1093, in which she says Melchizedek was not Christ.

**Mountain Hideouts for Time of Trouble.** Reports that Ellen G. White designated some particular mountain spots as safe hideouts in the time of trouble have no known support in any of her writings, published or unpublished.

**Work to Close Up First in the South.** Ellen White is reported to have said that the work of the church would close up first in the Southern United States. If the statement was made, apparently it was made only in oral form, as there is no known support for the report in Ellen White's writings, published or unpublished.

## *2. An Association of Ideas*

Reports are frequently circulated which have their basis in what might be called an association of ideas.

**Status of Students in School Preparing for the Lord's Work.** Many believe Mrs. White taught that should the Lord come while our young people are in school, they would be accounted as if laboring in the harvest field. There is no known written authentication of this. This concept, probably correct, may find its support in an association of ideas. See *The Desire of Ages*, page 74:

"He [Jesus] was doing God's service just as much when laboring at the carpenter's bench as when working miracles for the multitude. And every youth who follows Christ's example of faithfulness and obedience in His lowly home may claim those words spoken of Him by the Father through the Holy Spirit, 'Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth.' Isaiah 42:1."

**Legalized Liquor and Sunday Laws.** Reports directly linking the repeal of the Prohibition Amendment of the United States Constitution with the passage of a national Sunday law are without foundation. These must be associated with a general statement in *Prophets and Kings*, page 186, which points out the "daring impiety" of legislators anywhere and at any time who would enact "laws to safeguard the supposed sanctity of the first day of the week" but who "at the same time are making laws legalizing the liquor traffic."

**Specific Targets of Impending Disaster.** In line with the prophecies of the Bible, Ellen White believed that the time is soon coming when Jesus will return and bring an end to the evils of this world. She also believed that large cities will not escape the turmoil and conflicts that will increase as we near the end of time. She warned about future disasters, but never predicted a date for any such events, or the involvement of any particular faith group.

Contrary to unsubstantiated reports, Ellen White made no prediction concerning the destruction of a twin-towered building in New York City or any other place in the world. She

described scenes involving the ruin of "magnificent," "lofty buildings" (see *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 11), but nowhere did she specify currently identifiable buildings.

Some point to an unpublished sermon delivered in 1905 in which Ellen White described a dream she received several months earlier of seeing a ball of fire coming from heaven that "settled in Nashville" (Ms 188, 1905). Notably, she related the same dream seven other times between 1904 and 1909, but described the fiery ball as coming "down upon the world" or "the earth." She made no mention of the city as a target in her report of the dream the very next day, or in later published sermons or writings. Taking into account all of her related statements, we do not believe she was singling out Nashville above any other city, but that she understood the scene to be representative of the widespread destruction the Bible predicts will occur prior to and at Christ's return, and the need for every person to be spiritually prepared for that grand event.

Ellen White's response to the rumor in 1906 that she had predicted the San Francisco earthquake is instructive. The story became so widespread that she published an article entitled "The Judgments of God on Our Cities" in the July 5, 1906, issue of the *Review and Herald*, in which, among other things, she denied having predicted the earthquake. As she had done a year earlier regarding the Nashville vision, she made the same kind of general application regarding how Christians should respond to coming judgments. Such calamities should serve as spiritual warnings and as motivators to share the good news of Christ's soon return.

See *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pages 411-414, for her warnings regarding the linking of specific places with predictions of disaster.

### ***3. Excerpts Taken Out of Their Setting***

Not infrequently people base their understanding of the Ellen G. White teachings upon a fragment of a sentence or upon an isolated statement removed from its setting. Writing of certain ones who made such a misuse of her writings, she spoke of their "picking out a sentence here and there, taking it from its proper connection, and applying it according to their idea."--*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 44.

**Events at Midnight.** Some mistakenly think that Mrs. White indicated that Christ will come at midnight. A careful reading of the statement in *Early Writings*, page 285, and *The Great Controversy*, pages 635, 636, reveals that God's people are "at midnight" delivered from the death sentence, and events from that hour happen rapidly until, according to *The Great Controversy*, page 640, "Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand."

**Eggs Upon Your Table.** Lifting the sentence from *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 400, which reads, "Eggs should not be placed upon your table," from the context of the paragraph and the setting of the chapter has led some to a distorted concept of Ellen G. White's position, set forth clearly in *The Ministry of Healing*, page 320, *Testimonies for the*

*Church*, vol. 7, p. 135, and vol. 9, p. 162, where she recognized the rightful place of eggs in the ordinary dietary program.

**Ellen G. White and the 144,000.** Nowhere in the Ellen G. White writings is there a statement to the effect that Mrs. White would be *one of* the 144,000. As recorded in *Early Writings*, page 40, the angel did tell her when, in vision, she seemed to be visiting another planet and desired to remain there, that "if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds," etc. See also the statement in *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 263.

#### ***4. Writings Falsely Attributed***

Through the years some Seventh-day Adventists have copied and used choice paragraphs from Ellen G. White articles published in the *Review and Herald* and other journals. Some have also copied choice statements written by others without noting the authorship and have mistakenly attributed them to Mrs. White. Oft-quoted proverbs and sayings have also been attributed to her erroneously.

**Sign Indicating Close of Probation.** A published statement which appeared in the *Review and Herald* Supplement of June 21, 1898, to the effect that a literal darkness will cover the earth as a sign to God's people that probation has closed, has been attributed wrongly to Ellen G. White. It was actually written by a Seventh-day Adventist minister. Such teaching is contrary to her statement in *The Great Controversy*, page 615, which reads: "When the irrevocable decision of the sanctuary has been pronounced and the destiny of the world has been forever fixed, the inhabitants of the earth will know it not."

**Angels Rearranging Environments and Changing Circumstances.** These words and the statement which follows that the prayers for "disinterested souls" lodged on heaven's altar will be answered before the censer is thrown down, are not from the pen of Ellen G. White, but are the expressions of S. N. Haskell on page 147 of his book, *Story of the Seer of Patmos*.

**Last Mediatorial Work of Christ.** A statement attributed to Mrs. White and bearing various source references such as *Review and Herald*, 1890, 1898, or 1912, to the effect that Christ's last mediatorial work will be in behalf of youth who have wandered from the fold, has not been traced to any Ellen G. White source. Inquirers are directed to the following statements: "When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, . . . many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 401). "The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house. . . A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 202). "Heaven is waiting and yearning for the return of the prodigals who have wandered far from the fold. Many of those who have strayed away may be brought back by the loving service of God's children" (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 10).

**Counsel on Planning and Living.** Interestingly enough, the counsel to live "as though you had 1,000 years to live, and as you would if you knew you must die tomorrow," originated in the writings of Mother Ann Lee of the Shakers, not in Ellen G. White sources. See *Time*, July 28, 1961, page 53. See *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 200, for the Ellen G. White statement, "We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us."

**Importance of Study on the Question of the 144,000.** A paragraph selected from a letter of one of Mrs. White's secretaries, expressing his opinion as to the importance of studying the question of the 144,000, has been presented in certain printed works as of Ellen G. White origin. See *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 174, 175, for the Ellen G. White position.

**Inhabited Planets in our Solar System.** Contrary to some reports, Ellen White did not identify by name any of the "worlds" that she was shown in vision. Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain with a special interest in astronomy, was present during at least one of these visions, and he is reported to have identified the planets Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus as being among those described. Some have mistakenly linked Elder Bates' remarks to Ellen White's description of a "place" inhabited by "noble" and "majestic" beings. In Ellen White's own account of her vision, however, she says only that she was taken to "A PLACE" that was bright and glorious" (emphasis supplied). She does not identify "the place" as Jupiter, Saturn, or any other planet in our solar system. Here is her description: "The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place." *Early Writings*, pp. 39, 40.

**Prayer is the Answer to Every Problem in Life.** A paragraph regarding the power of prayer that begins, "Prayer is the answer to every problem in life," is not from Ellen G. White, but appears to originate from a devotional reading found in *The Daily Word, June 18, 1952*. With slight variation, the quotation also appeared anonymously in the January 29, 1953, and October 7, 1965, issues of the *Review and Herald*. The statement, as usually circulated, carries the incorrect reference of *Review and Herald, October 7, 1865*. For a statement on prayer from Ellen G. White, see *Steps to Christ*, p. 100: "Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. . . . There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest."

**Seventh-day Adventists Urged to Leave the United States.** A statement that "the day is coming, and is not far off, when every Seventh-day Adventist will wish . . . that he were out

of the United States," has been incorrectly attributed to Ellen G. White. It is part of a sermon by A. T. Jones, published in the *General Conference Bulletin*, April 16, 1901, pages 265, 266.

**Using Testimonies in the Pulpit.** A purported Ellen G. White statement credited to "Proper Use of the Testimonies," pages 4, 5, to the effect that her writings should never be read from the pulpit, is unauthenticated.

**Public Schools.** There is no statement from Ellen White that "the worst Adventist (or church) school is better than the best public school." She did, however, warn of the dangers of public schools, and strongly emphasized the many advantages of Christian education over the false theories, influences, and associations connected with the public school system. See, for example, *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 193-196.

**World Could Have Been Warned Within Two Years After 1888.** A statement reportedly found in the *General Conference Bulletin* of 1892. Elder S. N. Haskell provided that reference from memory in a talk published in 1899. No *Bulletin* was published in 1892, nor has the statement been found in any other published or unpublished source.

### ***5. Pure Fiction***

Some statements said to be from Ellen G. White are fiction.

**Apostasy of Seventh-day Adventist Churches or Conferences.** The report that Mrs. White predicted the apostasy of entire Seventh-day Adventist churches and conferences is without support. See the statement concerning "The Shaking" in *Early Writings*, pages 269-273; and *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 41, for these words: "Company after company from the Lord's army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God."

**Attitudes Toward Elders Jones and Waggoner.** The statement attributed to Ellen G. White comparing the *asserted* rejection of the teachings of Elders Jones and Waggoner in and following 1888, to the rejection of Caleb and Joshua on the part of Israel, is not a part of the Ellen G. White writings. It is the product of another author, whose identity is unknown. Various impressive but incorrect credit lines have been used in connection with the statement in circulation.

**The Loud Cry Message Rejected.** While certain expressions parallel *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 468, 469, no Ellen G. White source has been found for a statement credited to "Taking Up a Reproach," predicting that the message of the angel of Revelation 18:1 will be "ridiculed, spoken against, and rejected by the majority."

**Political Party or Family Name of Last President of the United States.** Reports that Ellen G. White indicated directly or indirectly the family name or political party of the President of the United States at the time of earth's closing scenes, are pure fiction.

**France and Religious Liberty.** Reports that Ellen G. White named France as the last haven of religious liberty cannot be supported.

**Vision of Global Death Toll and a New World Order.** A sensational vision, credited to the April 25, 1889, *Review and Herald*, in which Ellen G. White was supposedly shown the White House in America and a judgment of global death coming from the East leading to a new world order is entirely fictitious. No *Review and Herald* was published on April 25, 1889, nor is the content of the vision found in any of Ellen G. White's writings.