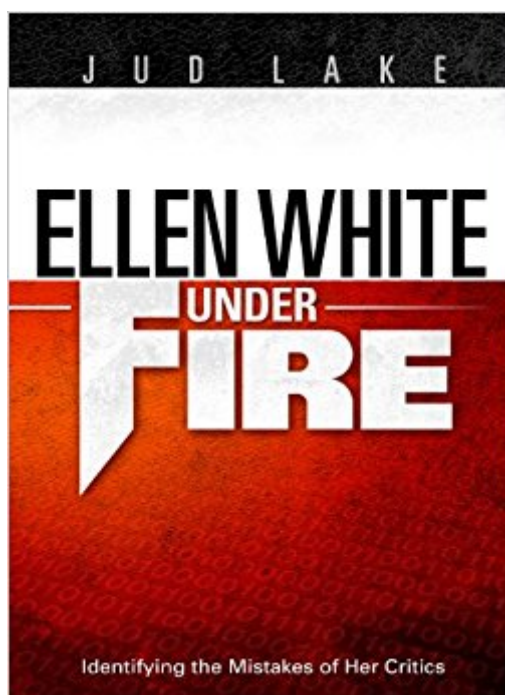


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# Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying The Mistakes Of Her Critics



## Synopsis

During her lifetime, Ellen White withstood wave upon wave of personal criticisms. Yet the historical records confirm her as a person of integrity, and her writings confirm her loyalty to the Bible. In *Ellen White Under Fire*, Dr. Jud Lake provides a comprehensive assessment of Ellen White critics, past and present, as well as her defenders all the while building confidence in her prophetic gift.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Good stuff! Perceptive! A book long overdue! Whether you love Ellen White or hate her, this is a book that you need to read. --George Knight, professor emeritus of Church History, Andrews University  
Nearly a century after Ellen Whites death, critics continue to attack the legacy of her ministry. In his book, Dr. Jud Lake traces the history of Ellen Whites critics from the earliest days of her ministry until the present. He demonstrates how an accurate understanding of inspiration prevents one from falling into the false expectations raised by her critics. This invaluable book provides a real service to all who have read charges made against Mrs. White and have wanted clear factual answers to refute those false claims. --James R. Nix, Director, Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.  
Jud Lake is to be commended for addressing the deeper issues behind all the attacks on Ellen White. *Ellen White Under Fire* provides a careful analysis of the major issues in the writings of Ellen White inspiration, authority, and interpretation. The book will be a real help for those confronted by the multitude of websites and books attacking Ellen White. --Gerhard Pfandl, associate director, Biblical Research Institute

Jud Lake, Th.D., D.Min., is professor of Preaching and Adventist Studies in the School of Religion at Southern Adventist University where he has taught since 1997. He is a passionate advocate of expository preaching and Ellen Whites prophetic ministry. At age 17 he was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church during a Kenneth Cox evangelistic crusade and remembers well the profound impact Ellen Whites book, Steps to Christ, had on his life. In addition to his responsibilities at Southern, he is editor of the website, <http://ellenwhiteanswers.org>. He enjoys exercising, writing, eating good food, playing with his dog, and time with family and friends.

This is of course an apologetics book for the gift of prophecy of Ellen White. This book readdresses many issues that have basically been addressed in the past and provides answers to others that haven't been fully satisfied. This is not a book where you can just read thought but more of a document/slash fact finding book. I do like the helpful websites given by the author to combat the false allegations by critics.

I gave it five stars because its a great defense of ellen white and the author is meticulous about debunking all the garbage on the internet and that have been historically thrown at her. This book is heady and not very literary but in terms of information the author did a great job.

I have read Lake's book and find it weak in its argumentation and very selective in its approach to the real issues. Lake's book has not shaken, in the least, my position that Ellen White was not divinely inspired. Also the well documented research by Numbers, Rea, Ratzlaff, Anderson, and Canright have hardly been addressed by Lake. I post a detailed review of Lake's book below, written by a former SDA. The review can be found at the Sabbatismos website: Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics by Jud Lake (Pacific Press, 2010) Dr. Jud Lake, a religion professor at Southern Adventist University, has emerged as one of the leading defenders of Ellen White, writing Ellen White Under Fire and operating a Web site dedicated to Ellen White apologetics. Ellen White Under Fire is highly recommended by Seventh-day Adventist thought leaders, and it will probably be widely used as a textbook for prophetic guidance classes in SDA universities. Lake's book represents the most comprehensive and thoughtful recent attempt to answer the critics of Ellen White and of the SDA denomination. As such, it is a valuable articulation of current SDA thought. We recommend Ellen White Under Fire to anyone interested in her prophetic role in the SDA Church, but unfortunately, we cannot recommend its conclusions. Ellen

White Under Fire is based on extensive research from SDA scholars, but its coverage of the criticisms of Ellen White still leaves much to be desired. (For instance, Ronald L. Numbers' book *Prophetess of Health*, the most significant critique of Ellen White, receives scant attention from Lake.) Dr. Lake has developed a fairly comprehensive list of EGW criticisms (22-24), but former Adventists would appreciate the inclusion of at least some evidence for those criticisms. On the positive side, Lake deserves credit for delivering a book with high readability. In effect, Dr. Lake serves as an intermediary, bringing SDA scholarly ideas down to the level of the average reader; unfortunately, his pro-Ellen White bias (the book is dedicated to her) results in obfuscation of her errors. The publisher deserves credit for producing an attractive hardcover book, but there are a few problems with the publication format, including the lack of an index and the inconvenient location of notes at the end of the book. In addition, the guillotine-shaped F from the word Fire in the title may be a little over the top, but it probably accurately reflects SDA perceptions of Ellen White detractors. In fact, ministry organizations such as Sabbatismos don't critique Ellen White's writing maliciously. We're trying to share our understanding of the gospel, and her gospel contradicts what we find in scripture.

Putting Context in Context

Lake's thesis is that "Ellen White wasn't the fanatic her critics make her out to be, that her prophetic gift doesn't threaten the final authority of the Bible, and that she was a Christian woman with deep evangelical piety whose voice deserves to be heard in its original historical and literary contexts . . . ." (14). Lake believes that the critics have been unfair toward Ellen White, merely recycling criticisms promulgated by D.M. Canright, the most notable early EGW critic, without reference to the church's answers. He indicates that the criticisms of Ellen White would be defused by employing correct principles of interpretation. In particular, people should read everything Ellen White penned regarding an issue, then explore the literary and historical context of each statement or testimony (180). Several problems emerge from Lake's rules of interpretation for Ellen White. First, her published writings are too vast to facilitate an exploration of everything she wrote on a particular subject. In addition, the Ellen G. White Estate hasn't released all EGW writings for publication, so ordinary researchers are unable to access all statements of interest. Finally, the White Estate archive is accessible to approved researchers only, and even these scholars must submit requests to a committee if they wish to use unreleased material. How can anyone other than the most trustworthy SDA scholars gain access to all of Ellen White's writings on a particular topic? It's impossible. Therefore, Adventist pastors and laity are dependent upon the scholars to tell them what Ellen White means. And of course, the conclusions of the critics are rendered automatically invalid under Lake's formula because they don't have access to all her writings. The interpretive problems are compounded when one considers that

literary context is often impossible to establish because so many of her statements have been released in compilations that frequently use ellipses and often feature very brief quotations. In addition, literary context should include tracing the history of her published statements, and this is extremely difficult because most of the materials published during her lifetime were revised and reused--often several times, making it difficult for most people to trace growth or nuances in her thought process. Historical context is also difficult to establish because most people can't access the personal correspondence and other documents held in the White Estate. Obviously, the personal circumstances of the original recipient might have influenced a particular testimony. Generally, we don't even know the identity of the original recipients. While we hate to pry into the personal lives of long-deceased SDAs, we are told that it's impossible to fully understand and apply Ellen White's counsel without studying the historical circumstances that prompted the testimonies. Many Adventists are actually happy with historical ambiguities because they can dismiss difficult testimonies, assuming that those rebukes apply to long-forgotten situations--not to their own lives.

**Recycled Criticisms** According to Lake, critics such as Sabbatismos treat Ellen White unfairly by quoting her out of context in order to twist her meaning. He states, "To misrepresent the meaning of Ellen White's writings and present to others a perspective of her words contrary to what she really taught is bearing a false witness. Moreover, to purposely and blatantly ignore the original contexts of her writings is a breach of Christian ethics and is patently wrong. Ultimately, those who engage in this unfair activity disqualify themselves as fair and objective interpreters of Ellen White's writings" (201-202). However, Lake acknowledges that many legalistic Adventists misinterpret Ellen White (264-268), so by his own recognition, they must also be guilty of "bearing false witness." Ironically, Lake also misrepresents the full context of various EGW statements, along with misrepresenting the views of the critics.

**Canright** Ellen White Under Fire traces contemporary criticism of Ellen White back to arguments from D.M. Canright's two most important books: Seventh-day Adventism Renounced (1888) and Life of Mrs. E.G. White (1919). Canright had been a prominent Adventist minister until he left the church after a long association with James and Ellen White. Lake links the groundbreaking research of Ronald Numbers (Prophetess of Health) and Walter Rea (The White Lie) to Canright (65), and he contends that influential former-Adventist writers Dale Ratzlaff and Dirk Anderson merely "recycle Canright's old charges" (78). Of course, the implication is that the criticisms are simply "mud from a muddy spring," to borrow a phrase from Percy Bysshe Shelley. The SDA Church has thoroughly demonized Canright's character, so when SDAs hear that modern critics are simply reusing Canright's charges, they immediately shun further investigation. Although Lake doesn't repeat most of the character assassinations against Canright, he is careful not to

contradict them (75). The strategy of tying modern critics to Canright is unfair. The implication that Canright's charges have all been answered must be accompanied by evidence, for IF Canright is generally correct from a biblical standpoint, then Adventism can never answer him successfully. The church's comprehensive answers to Canright were delivered well after his death in 1919; the first formal answer was W.H. Branson's *In Defense of the Faith* (1933), and a more complete reply was F.D. Nichol's *Ellen White and Her Critics* (1951). Perhaps Canright's arguments were so persuasive that answers were difficult to construct. If so, Canright's staying power could be related to the essential truth of his points rather than to a lack of imagination among Ellen White's critics.

Critics Reject the 1888 Message

Lake holds that Elder Canright (and the other critics) never understood or accepted the message of righteousness by faith that was introduced to the SDA Church at the 1888 General Conference session. Prior to 1888, the SDA Church had taught that the ceremonial law was the "schoolmaster" of Galatians 3, but the righteousness by faith message of Elders A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner contended that the schoolmaster was moral rather ceremonial. However, Jones and Waggoner continued insisting on the perpetuity of the ten commandments. According to Lake, Canright took an extreme position prior to the 1888 General Conference, discarding the law and the seventh-day Sabbath altogether (54). However, Canright's new position could only be considered extreme if it is unbiblical. Canright clearly understood that Galatians 3 presents a specific beginning date for the law, as well as a specific ending date (see *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*, pp. 318, 322, 334). Here is the key passage from Galatians 3: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator" (Gal. 3:16-19, NIV). According to Galatians 3, the law came into effect 430 years after Abraham and lasted until the coming of Christ, the Seed. And because the Jews didn't differentiate between moral and ceremonial laws (the writings of Moses were simply designated "the law"), Paul is really saying that all Old Testament law passed out of effect when the Seed came to earth. In standing against the perpetuity of the law given on Sinai, Canright stands with the Apostle Paul instead of standing with the 1888ers. While Lake insists that Ellen White must always be quoted in context (and we agree), he doesn't extend the same courtesy to Canright. He ignores textual context when he quotes Canright's criticism of Adventism as centered on "law, law,

law," but then criticizes Canright for discarding the law entirely (54). Lake never explains Canright's position on the beginning and ending dates for the schoolmaster of Galatians 3, and he never allows Canright to explain his position on the perpetuity of a higher law, of which the ten commandments were a mere manifestation (Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced, pp. 305-337). Compounding the ill treatment of Canright, Lake distorts the historical context of 1888 by ignoring the legalistic implications of the message that supposedly introduced Adventism to righteousness by faith. In the revised edition of *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventism* (2009), Dale Ratzlaff states, "At times [the 1888 message] sounds almost like the Pauline gospel; yet at other times it is distinct from it and confuses imputed and imparted righteousness. It has perfectionistic overtones and mistakenly equates the righteousness of the law with the righteousness of faith which is 'God's righteousness'" (317). Rather than being a genuine teaching of "the vital, life-giving message of righteousness by faith" (57-58), the 1888 message actually promotes extreme perfectionism. For instance, shortly after the 1888 conference, one of originators of the righteousness by faith movement stated, "It is only through being one with Him that we can be Christians, and only through Christ within us that we keep the commandments--it being all by faith in Christ that we do and say these things. When the day comes that we actually keep the commandments of God, we will never die, because keeping the commandments is righteousness . . . Life, then, and keeping the commandments go together. If we die now, Christ's righteousness will be imputed to us and we will be raised, but those who live to the end are made sinless before He comes, having so much of Christ's being in them that they 'hit the mark' every time, and stand blameless without an intercessor . . . ." (A.T. Jones, qtd. in George R. Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy*, Review & Herald, 1987, p. 56). Because the 1888 message was in harmony with her perfectionism, Ellen White heartily endorsed it: "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. . . . It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God" (TM 91-92). For Ellen White and A.T. Jones, righteousness by faith is inextricably linked to perfect obedience to God's commandments. Thus, faith enables the believer to keep the commandments, resulting in an orientation toward works rather than faith. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9). For some reason, Dr. Lake chooses not to establish the historical and literary context of the 1888 messages. Instead, he simply blames the critics for not accepting righteousness by faith (83-84). Lake holds that "purposely and blatantly ignor[ing] the original contexts of [Ellen White's] writings is a breach of Christian ethics and is patently wrong" (202), and we agree; we simply ask him to apply the same

courtesy to Canright and all the other critics. In contrast to the teaching of acquiring righteousness (perfect obedience) through faith, the true gospel teaches, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:5-7). Understood in its true context, the 1888 message is works-righteousness. That's why Canright and the other EGW critics remain unimpressed by the SDA discovery of "righteousness by faith." Ellen White vis-à-vis Scripture

The Adventist Church believes that former Adventists reject the ministry of Ellen White because their view of inspiration is too rigid (106), so Dr. Lake spends a great deal of time explaining the Adventist position on inspiration. The dominant evangelical view, which Lake identifies as the verbal-plenary model, holds that the words of scripture are "divinely elicited and controlled," but that the prophets' "thinking and writing was both free and spontaneous" (J.I. Packer, qtd. on 108). Thus, most Christians recognize that God does not dictate scripture (109), but they insist that the message accurately reflects God's communication. The action of the Holy Spirit infuses the entire process of inspiration--from its reception to its communication (transmission). Sabbatists promote the verbal-plenary model of inspiration because "all scripture is God-breathed" (II Tim. 3:16). Paul doesn't say that only prophetic visions are God-breathed--he says that all scripture is God-breathed. Thus, God's action of breathing the inspired message extends all the way from the initial communication to the writing of scripture. Inspiration is a continuum--not a one-time event. Adventist scholars emphasize thought inspiration over verbal-plenary inspiration, which some SDAs falsely equate with divine dictation. However, SDA theologians have been unable to agree on the level of error that could creep into an inspired text via thought inspiration. Liberal SDAs accept the notion that inspired writings may reflect theological misunderstandings on the part of the writers, and this view comes in handy when they need to defend Ellen White against her shut door teachings and her inconsistent Trinitarianism. They can just say, "Well, she misunderstood some parts of her visions, and God graciously led her into greater light as she became able to accept it." On the other hand, conservative SDA scholars such as Dr. Lake reject the idea that a thought-inspired writer could garble a message from God. They are forced to hold thought inspiration because it was taught by Ellen White and because it was officially endorsed at the 1883 General Conference session (110). In 1883, Ellen White wanted to publish a revised version of her early Testimonies; obviously, updating the Testimonies would be impossible if God had dictated the original words. Therefore, it was imperative that Ellen White adopt a flexible theory of inspiration, so her early teaching that the Holy Spirit had "dictated"



scripture was necessarily abandoned (1SG 176). However, she continued to insist on a view of her own inspiration that is hardly separable from divine dictation. Writing in 1900, she declared, "The Holy Ghost is the author of the Scriptures and of the Spirit of Prophecy" (3SM 30). Because Lake is a conservative SDA, he accepts thought inspiration while rejecting the notion that inspired writers could misunderstand or misrepresent their revelations (94). To distance himself from the liberal overtones of thought inspiration, he identifies the dominant SDA view as the "whole-person" model of inspiration (115-120). The whole-person concept teaches that "while the words of scripture weren't the primary focus of the process of inspiration, it did reach the words of the biblical writers . . ." (115). Thus, the inspired words "reliably disclose God's thoughts and will to us" (119). It sounds like Lake is moving toward the dreaded verbal-plenary model, but he insists that the two are distinct, apparently because verbal-plenary is more closely linked to divine dictation (115). Lake criticizes Canright for stating that Ellen White considered "the very words in which her visions are recorded" as divinely inspired (106; *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced* 138), but Lake omits the evidence supporting Canright's statement: "I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision" (1SM 36; 2SG 293). "Before I stand on my feet, I have no thought of speaking as plainly as I do. But the Spirit of God rests upon me with power, and I cannot but speak the words given me. I dare not withhold one word of the testimony.... I speak the words given me by a higher power than human power, and I cannot, if I would, recall [retract] one sentence" (1MR 28). "While I am writing out important matter, He [God] is beside me, helping me. He lays out my work before me, and when I am puzzled for a fit word with which to express my thought, He brings it clearly and distinctly to mind" (2MR 156-157). "As soon as I take my pen in hand, I am not in darkness as to what to write. It is as plain and clear as a voice speaking to me, 'I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go'" (2MR 319). "For thirty years we [reference to herself] have been receiving the words of God and speaking them to His people" (4T 229). Lake is wrong to state that "Ellen White never claimed, as Canright charged repeatedly, that her very words were inspired" (111). In reality, when it suited her, Mrs. White was very definite about the precision of her words; however, when she wrote something embarrassing, she was happy to revise it under the guise of thought inspiration.

**The Bible Only?** The Seventh-day Adventist Church makes strenuous claims for its belief in "the Bible and the Bible only," without which it couldn't be considered a Protestant denomination. The exact relation of Ellen White to the Bible has been a quandary for Adventists ever since the inception of the church. James White claimed that Ellen's ministry was in harmony with sola scriptura so long as her visions did not add any doctrine not found in scripture (133), and G.I. Butler, an early president of the SDA General Conference, agreed: "If the

Bible should show the visions were not in harmony with it, the Bible would stand and the visions would be given up. This shows plainly that we hold the Bible the highest, our enemies to the contrary, notwithstanding" (135). Unfortunately for Adventism's claims, EGW does add doctrines such as the Investigative Judgment that are never mentioned in scripture. Many of her teachings add to scripture, contradict scripture, and obfuscate cardinal doctrines such as the completed atonement (see p. 228) and the nature and work of Christ. Lake states that "Ellen White's inspiration equals that of the Bible writers, but her prophetic authority is limited because of the nature of its relationship to the Bible" (151). What is her relationship to the Bible? She is a "postcanonical" prophet whose writings must be tested by scripture (155), but "her inspiration is qualitatively the same" (160); therefore, her writings "require full, equal obedience" as compared to scripture (161). Sola Scriptura was the Protestant response to Roman Catholicism's use of supposedly inspired but non-canonical sources. The Catholic Church considers the teachings of the saints, the decrees of the popes, and the decisions of church councils to be authoritative (but non-canonical) revelations of God's will, and the Protestants rejected any authority aside from scripture. It didn't matter that the authority was non-canonical. No other sources of authority were allowed. Thus, Protestantism was founded on the idea that there would be no further prophets with the same degree of inspiration as the Bible. Such a person would be an authority, and no additional authority was permitted. Yes, Protestants do allow for the spiritual gift of prophecy such as that predicted in Joel 2, but such prophecies are strictly for encouragement (1 Cor. 14:3). They are not authoritative in the sense that people have to believe them (1 Cor. 14:29). In contrast to Protestantism, Adventists do consider Ellen White's writings a "test," according to pioneer SDA leader J.N. Andrews (159). It is not acceptable to merely assert that Ellen White is subordinate to scripture because she is not part of the canon. If the SDA Church wants to believe in sola scriptura, it must have no source of authority aside from the Bible. Period. St. Ellen is not allowed as "a continuing and authoritative source of truth," as delineated by SDA fundamental belief number 18 (167). That's not sola scriptura! If the SDA Church wishes to keep Ellen White as a prophetess, they should at least be honest and acknowledge that they do not believe in "the Bible and the Bible only." The Literary Dependence (Plagiarism) of Ellen G. White A special aspect of Ellen White's relationship to scripture is the issue of plagiarism. Adventist writers insist on trying to show that the Bible writers utilized various sources in the same manner as Ellen White (124). Ellen White copied extensively from other writers in virtually all of her books, using the details gleaned from others to give her accounts an "I-saw-it" quality. I've personally studied her plagiarism in *The Desire of Ages*, *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and she frequently follows her sources page after page,

so that it seems she was simply writing with the Bible at one hand and a scholarly Christian book at the other. In many chapters, her own input was minimal. To compound the ethical problem, Mrs. White repeatedly denied referencing or even reading outside sources until after she had written her messages. Adventist writers such as Lake insist that Ellen White did nothing wrong, and that her actions are similar to those of the Bible writers, but is this assertion fair? Lake argues that Paul used lines from several Greek poets without attribution (120), that Luke used a variety of sources for his gospel (121), and that the Book of Revelation borrowed visionary descriptions from the ancient Book of Enoch (120-121). Thus, Lake concludes that Ellen White's borrowing "was no different from the practice of the biblical writers" (124).

### Literary "Dependence" of the Apostle Paul

The following quotes supposedly reveal Paul's borrowing from the Greek culture: "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" (Titus 1:12). "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33). Was Paul trying to cover his use of the ideas of others? No! He acknowledges his use of sources in the first two quotes, and the third was probably a well-known Greek proverb (see Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 808, 1957). As a point of comparison, it isn't necessary to acknowledge Ben Franklin when saying, "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise!" The phrase is so common that no one would charge the user of this proverb with dishonesty. In addition, quotation marks hadn't been invented when the Bible was being written, so Paul clearly did his best to give proper credit when appropriate. But Ellen White should be charged with dishonesty because she frequently denied using sources, copied extensively, and was clearly dependent upon the writings of others to describe details that she claimed to have seen directly in vision.

### Is the Gospel of Luke Plagiarized?

Suggesting that Luke's research was similar to Ellen White's is also disingenuous because Luke clearly states that his material is based on sources "who from the first were eyewitnesses": "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you . . . ." (Luke 1:1-3). Like Paul, Luke humbly acknowledges his use of human sources. Why couldn't Ellen White do the same?

### The Book of Revelation--Indebted to the Book of Enoch?

Dr. Lake's most intriguing attempt to vindicate Ellen White's literary indebtedness is his connection of the Book of Enoch to the Book of Revelation. According to Lake, "John borrowed lines from the book of Enoch" to help him describe what he had seen in vision. Let's look at one of

the parallel passages listed by Lake (the other five supposed parallels are discussed in Appendix A): "And the first heaven shall depart and pass away, and a new heaven shall appear" (Enoch 91:16). "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1, NKJV). Unfortunately for Lake's argument, the Apostle John was not borrowing from the Book of Enoch; instead, he was probably drawing on an Old Testament concept: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth . . . ." (Is. 65:17, KJV; see also Is. 66:22). Maybe the writer(s) of Enoch were literarily dependent on Isaiah.... The parallels between Enoch and Revelation are merely common phrases of Jewish apocryphal literature. God inspired Bible writers to use terminology that was familiar to the people, but the prophets had no literary dependence on extra-biblical sources employing these terms. In fact, the extra-biblical authors themselves may have been largely dependent on inspired sources for many of the common apocalyptic terms. On the other hand, EGW was evidently reliant on outside sources for descriptive material and other extra-biblical details. She neglected to acknowledge these sources, in contrast to the forthright approach of Bible writers such as Luke and Paul. In addition, the vast majority of Ellen White's plagiarisms were not common terminologies of her day, so her use of descriptive phrases does not parallel John's supposed indebtedness to the Book of Enoch. Mrs. White copied sources repeatedly, page by page, as anyone can verify by reading SDA scholar Fred Veltman's Life of Christ Research Project. Ellen White hadn't seen any visions from God, so she had to create the illusion of a visionary experience by borrowing descriptions and historical details, then denying any familiarity with the outside sources. Surely her ethical situation is far different from that of the biblical prophets.

Is Jud Lake Being Fair to the Critics (or to Ellen White)? As mentioned previously, Lake believes that the critics have been unfair to Ellen White. He bluntly states, "To misrepresent the meaning of Ellen White's writings and present to others a perspective of her words contrary to what she really taught is bearing a false witness. Moreover, to purposely and blatantly ignore the original contexts of her writings is a breach of Christian ethics and is patently wrong. Ultimately, those who engage in this unfair activity disqualify themselves as fair and objective interpreters of Ellen White's writings" (201-202). But has Lake properly interpreted Ellen White's statements based on historical and literary context, and has he extended the same courtesy to the critics? Lake routinely summarizes arguments from the critics, then answers his summary rather than their actual words. In addition, Lake generally deletes the reasoning of the critics, such as when he cites Canright's "law, law, law" comment without allowing Canright to explain why he had concluded that the law was obsolete (54). Such treatment shows that Lake is intent on assuring loyal Adventists that everything has been answered without actually answering the real points. Even

more serious than distorting the critics is Lake's distortion of Ellen White. *Ellen White Under Fire* often fails to acknowledge the spectrum of EGW quotes on a given topic, relying on her uplifting quotes and ignoring or minimizing her difficult ones. In addition, Lake often avoids a full discussion of the literary context, and he sometimes doesn't fully state the historical context. Such distortions prevent Ellen White from being understood as she deserves to be understood--in her own voice and in her own era. Instead, she remains a captive of the authorized SDA interpreters because most people don't have the time or resources to investigate her thoroughly. She was a remarkable woman whose "inspiration" consisted of her ability to glean information from a variety of sources and apply that knowledge in ways that her followers found useful. Despite her prophetic delusions, she deserves better than to have her clear statements twisted by the Adventist Church, which has woven a tapestry of error that even she wouldn't recognize. This section will present three case studies to demonstrate Lake's repeated avoidance of full context.

Case Study 1: The Shut Door

One of the areas that Lake de-contextualizes is Ellen White's early teaching regarding the shut door. The shut door doctrine held that only Millerite believers could be saved after the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844--the date upon which William Miller predicted Christ's second coming. Christ did not return, so some Millerites salved their injured pride with the idea that the door of probation had closed in 1844. Thus, all non-Millerites would be lost. Most Millerites quickly rejected the shut door, but the group that eventually became Seventh-day Adventists maintained the shut door until the early 1850s (see Arthur L. White, "Ellen G. White and the Shut Door Question," p. 24 - paper available from White Estate), largely because Ellen's visions taught the shut door. Lake's treatment of t

After reading through Dr. Lake's book several times I have found it to be very strong in its argumentation and quite solid in addressing the "deeper issues" behind the criticisms of Ellen White. What objective readers will notice about this work is that it is very well organized. There are three primary headings that Dr. Lake uses in his work. The first heading is the history of Ellen White criticisms. Readers will appreciate the accurate accounting of the history behind the criticisms along with the footnotes to the quotes. Of especial note in this section is Dr. Lake's charitable treatment of D. M. Canright, the most influential of early EGW critics. While some pro-Adventist authors have attacked Mr. Canright personally and placed the blame solely on him, Dr. Lake does not use such tactics. In Lake's estimation "it appears that both sides [Adventist and Canright] were at fault" (EWUF pg 56) and his theory that Canright's "departure and future war on Adventism" was based on his being a "culprit" and "casualty" of "Phariseism" has merit as the historical references show

(Ibid pg 55). The second heading deals with the core issues of the debate. This is the heart of Lake's book and in order for any criticism of his work to be effective it needs to spend much time refuting him here. I have not, as of yet, seen any critical response that even come close to doing this. In this section Dr. Lake explains the nature of inspiration, EGW's authority, how to correctly interpret her writings, and he takes a look at the big picture of her message. I do not want to get overly enamored with the details here (read the book for yourself folks!) but I will touch upon a few gems in the section. His explanation of the six models of inspiration, beginning on pg 106, is very useful for those trying to grasp the issue. In regard to EGW's authority, I especially appreciated his quoting of Uriah Smith's analogy of instructions regarding a sea journey (See "Do We Discard the Bible by Endorsing the Visions? Review and Herald Jan 13, 1863 quoted on pg 134, 135 in EWUF). I find that illustration to be a great tool in helping the reader to understand Mrs. White Biblically derived authority (see pg 134). Also the two chapters about correct principles of interpretation are essential for all those who would give Mrs. White a fair hearing. It is an indisputable fact that a great deal of the criticisms today can be eliminated if one simply reads Mrs. White in context and Dr. Lake gives a few examples of this in these sections. And the EGW quotes in his chapters about the big picture are fantastic glimpses at the evangelical heart of Mrs. White. I simply cannot resist sharing snippets of them now: "The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation, and redemption, - the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers" (EWUF pg 214) "The atoning sacrifice, the righteousness of Christ, is to us the vital center of all truth. In the cross of Calvary, mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other..." (Ibid partial quote) "There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of the Scriptures: - Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme...." (Ibid partial quote) Aren't these quotes great? These are some, among many, of the EGW quotes that the critics tend to ignore. I have to agree with Dr. Lake's assessment that "for Ellen White, the gospel- with Christ's cross at its core- is the Christ centered story by which God redeems human beings and restores them to His image..." (EWUF pg 215) Finally the sprinkling of illustrations and charts throughout this second heading are very useful for visual learners (i.e. See Figure 3 on pg 95 for Revelation/Inspiration/Illumination illustration: See pg 158 for the Revelatory Pattern of Authority Table. See Figure 5 on pg 181 for Circles of Context for Interpreting Ellen White's Writings) In the

third and final heading, "Responding in the Affirmative," Dr. Lake does an excellent job of showing the numerous positive affirmations of Mrs. White. One example is that she "affirmed the Bible as the revealed Word of God and thus the final authority for Christian life and teaching" (pg 252). Another good example is her affirmation of "the historic Protestant understanding of justification and sanctification." (pg 254). Take for instance the following quote: "Let the subject be made distinct and plain that it is not possible to effect anything in our standing before God or in the gift of God to us through creature merit. Should faith and works purchase the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under obligation to the creature. Here is an opportunity for falsehood to be accepted as truth. If any man can merit salvation by anything he may do, then he is in the same position as the Catholic to do penance for his sins. Salvation, then, is partly of debt, that may be earned as wages. If man cannot, by any of his good works, merit salvation, then it must be wholly of grace, received by man as a sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is wholly a free gift. Justification by faith is placed beyond controversy. And all this controversy is ended, as soon as the matter is settled that the merits of fallen man in his good works can never procure eternal life for him." (pg 234) When it comes to this matter I find myself in perfect agreement with Mrs. White who states: "We must not trust at all to ourselves nor to our good works; but when as erring, sinful beings we come to Christ, we may find rest in His love. God will accept every one that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Savior" (pg 233) Under this heading, Lake also mentions how Mrs. White helped move the early Seventh-day Adventist church away from heretical teachings (i.e. the holy flesh movement, J.H. Kellogg's pantheism). This is quite strange if she were a false prophet! His concluding chapter "Why I believe in Ellen White's Prophetic Ministry" is a well articulated, logical defense of her ministry in twenty premises. Above and beyond all these things I would say to those interested in the subject, simply read her works- Steps to Christ or Desire of Ages is a good place to start. Those with an open heart will find Ellen White to be an uplifter of Him whose Name alone brings salvation- JESUS the Christ! Lastly, I will make mention of some of the other excellent factors about this book. Besides the great organization on a large scale (see what I have written above about the 3 headings) the book is also very well organized on a small scale. For instance Lake's organization of "contemporary criticisms of Ellen White into twelve basic categories that summarize the main charges against her prophetic ministry" (pg 22) along with internet resources that provide a response is tremendously useful. Another example of this excellent small scale organization are the "three headings" (pg 29) for criticisms and the church's responses during the first forty years of Mrs. White's ministry seen in chapters 2 to 4. Numerous other examples of this meticulous organization could be given. I believe the reader will greatly appreciate it. Also, the succinct summaries at the

end of each chapter, the copious (and I do mean copious!) amount of source material found in the End Notes, and the 4 appendixes makes this book a gateway to tons of more useful information. Besides the internet resources given in chapter 1, the 4th appendix, (appendix D) is a list of resources for answering the critics of Ellen White. This stands as a strong rebuttal to those who argue that *Ellen White Under Fire* hardly addresses the criticisms of Numbers, Rea, Ratzlaff, Anderson and Canright. And on a related note, that particular criticism of Lake's book is hardly fair. It can be likened to critiquing a construction worker, whose express purpose was to lay the foundation of a house, for not building the roof. Dr. Lake stated "in the introduction, [that] the purpose of this book is NOT to answer one charge after another BUT RATHER to focus on the underlying issues raised by criticisms of Ellen White's prophetic ministry." (Ibid pg 190 emphasis mine). Even with that said though, Dr. Lake's book does address several specific criticisms. He touched upon a possible implication from Dale Ratzlaff's citing a line from *Desire of Ages* with an emphasis that he (Ratzlaff) added. The specific quote was that "Jesus had older brothers" and brother Ratzlaff put the word "older" in italics. Dr. Lake correctly noted that this emphasis "could leave a reader with the impression that Ellen White believed that Mary had given birth to children before she bore Jesus" (EWUF pg 183) and thus was not a virgin. This of course would be contrary to the Scriptures. Lake points out that if the quote had been given in its full context then it would not be "open for misunderstanding" (Ibid). When Mrs. White's quote is read in the immediate and greater context of the book *Desire of Ages* it can be shown that she believed that these brothers were "the sons of Joseph." Thus her position was that "Jesus' older brother were children from a previous marriage of Joseph" (See pg 183) and that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born. Lake also dealt with the very frequent out of context usage of Mrs. White's quote that shows the distinction of persons between the man Christ Jesus and the Lord God Almighty [aka: God the Father] (See pg 183, 184). He addressed Dirk Anderson's erroneous usage of the pestilence prophecy (See pg 190-195) and Sidney Cleveland's feeble attempt to make Ellen White out to be a communicator with the dead (pg 195-201). Therefore the issue here cannot be that Dr. Lake does not address specific criticisms rather it appears that the critics simply don't like the ones that he chose to address. Maybe these were not the issues bothering them? Or, and I am tempted to think this is more likely, an Adventist apologist can play the pipe and the critics will not dance, he can mourn and they will not lament. No matter which specific criticisms are addressed in the book there will always be some who will complain that this or that specific one was not in the book. No worries though because *Ellen White Under Fire* also provides numerous references that deal with the majority, if not all, of the other criticisms. Here are a few of the resources it recommends to help with this matter: "The Prophet and



Her Critics: A Striking New Analysis Refutes the Charges that Ellen White 'Borrowed' the Health Message" and "Acquired or Inspired: Exploring the Origins of the Adventist Lifestyle" (mentioned on pg 296 and 297 in appendix D) are resources that answer Ronald Numbers. [Ellenwhiteanswers.org/answers/plagiarism](http://Ellenwhiteanswers.org/answers/plagiarism) (mentioned on pg 22) is a resource that answers Walter Rea. See also pgs 120-123 section entitled "Inspiration and literary borrowing: a case study" and [adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/plagiarist.pdf](http://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/plagiarist.pdf) (mentioned on pg 337) Graffiti in the Holy of Holies (mentioned on pg 297) is a resource that answers Dale Ratzlaff. See also [ellenwhiteanswers.org](http://ellenwhiteanswers.org) for articles addressing brother Ratzlaff. [Whiteestate.org](http://Whiteestate.org); [ellewhite.info](http://ellewhite.info); [ellen-white.com](http://ellen-white.com); [Adventists-defense-league.blogspot.com](http://Adventists-defense-league.blogspot.com); [ellenwhiteanswers.org](http://ellenwhiteanswers.org); etc,... (mentioned on pg 296) are resources that answer Dirk Anderson (along with the others) Besides these Lake mentions other books like Francis D. Nichol's "Ellen G. white and Her Critics: An Answer to the Major Charges That Critics Have Brought Against Mrs. White" and other websites (See chapter 1, pgs 22-24; appendix D, pgs 296, 297 for the total list). And there are even more books that could be mentioned. A careful reading of the end notes in *Ellen White Under Fire* will unveil even more of these resources. All and all this book is an marvelous work and everyone who is interested in the prophetic gift, whether they are friend, foe, or indifferent to Ellen White, ought to read it. After reading it, I can say with a certainty, only provided by the Holy Ghost, that it has strengthened my conviction, to use the words of Clifford Goldstein, that "the most logical explanation for [Mrs. White's] life and her works is that she had the prophetic gift" (pg 17). Mrs. White is an asset to Christendom, her works like *Steps to Christ* and *Desire of Ages* have led thousands if not millions into a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and all open hearted readers can receive great benefit by examining her works. I know that I have! I am happily... Yours in Christ, Jason

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