

Test Questions – Lesson 19

1.

Underline the words in parentheses which correctly complete these statements:

1.

The prophetic messages given to Mrs. White were (all published in books) (all published first in periodical articles) (published in pamphlets, periodical articles, and books).

2.

Mrs. White (followed) (did not follow) the same procedure in preparation of her later books as of her earlier books.

3.

There are (approximately 20) (not quite 40) (more than 50) Ellen G. White books in current circulation today.
2.

Check the correct completions here:

1.

Mrs. White customarily wrote her messages – in longhand () with a typewriter. () in shorthand ()

2.

Mrs. White’s literary assistants made corrections in – spelling () grammar () repetition () expression of thoughts ().

3.

Typewriters were available for copying Mrs. White’s writings –
1.

trough all of her life. () beginning in the 1880’s. ()
4.

The first one to give Mrs. White literary assistance was – Mariam Davis () her husband, James White. ()
3.

Name four other of Mrs. White’s literary helpers, as mentioned in this section and in Treasure Chest.

1.

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2.

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3.

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4.

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4.

Answer these questions:

1.

What three principal responsibilities were assigned by Mrs. White to the Trustees of her writings?

a.

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b.

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c.

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2.

What fourth line has developed since Mrs. White’s death?

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We hope you enjoyed your Treasure Chest “visit” to the White Publications office. If ever you are in Washington, D. C., be sure to visit the General Conference and the White Publications offices in person, and see the vault, the writings, the “big Bible, “and other items. You will be heartily welcomed by the office staff.

5.

List titles of six E. G White books published since Mrs. White’s death.

1.

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2.

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3.

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4.

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5.

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6.

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6.

Answer these questions:

1.

Considering that more than fifty E. G. White books are now in circulation, would you say that the Lord’s counsel have been withheld from the church?

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2.

Do we now need more new compilations of E. G. White counsels?.....

Or more diligent study of materials already available?

7.

In your own words, briefly state your understanding of the origin of the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

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PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

GUIDING TEXT: What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the churches. - Revelation 1:11.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

God's prophets were bidden to make known to others what He had revealed to them in vision. To Ezekiel came the command: “Declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 40:4); and in the guiding text above John was instructed to "write in a book" what he saw, and to “send it unto the churches."

The task of writing out the inspired messages, framing in human language the presentation of revealed truth, was not easy. John wrote, as did Ezra, Moses, Ezekiel, Luke, and other Bible writers. Paul, presumably suffering impaired eyesight, dictated most of his inspired letters. Jeremiah also employed literary help in committing to writing some of the instruction God gave to him. Jeremiah 36:4, 17, 18. Thus the messages of the early prophets have been preserved in written form, to serve from generation to generation.

WRITINGS OF Ellen White.

What was involved in the writing and publishing of the E. G. White books? Did Mrs. White employ literary assistants? How are her writings cared for today?

Preservation of Mrs. White’s Messages

Soon after her first vision, Mrs. White was instructed to «make known to others what I have revealed to you" (*Life Sketches*, p. 69). And again she tells us, "Early in my public labors I was bidden by the Lord, "Write, write the things that are revealed to you." - *Review and Herald*, June 14, 1906.

In oral discourse and interview, in countless letters of counsel and reproof, and in the published word - in pamphlets, periodical articles, and books, - the prophetic messages given to her were imparted to the people. Her many books published through the years of her ministry, and a number more that have been issued since her death, provide a permanent record of the light God gave to her. There are today more than 130 E. G. White books in current circulation, published by Seventhday Adventist publishing houses around the world translated into many languages. As she first undertook the work of preparing books, Mrs. White wrote chapter by chapter from the first to the last, painstakingly seeking to picture to her readers the light and instruction given to her. In later years, she frequently included in chapters of the books on which she was working some things she had written at an earlier time on the same subject, drawing from her earlier books, her pe-riodical articles or her manuscripts. This brought a fullness and richness into some of the later books which is not observed in the first simple accounts penned in the earlier years. Through her lifelong ministry, Mrs. White labored diligently, with care and exactness, in placing before the people what God had revealed to her.

Mrs. White's Skilled Literary Helpers

With her busy life of writing, speaking, traveling, in addition to the responsibilities of a homemaker and mother, it was imperative that Mrs. White have some assistance with the mechanics of her work - copying the messages and readying them for publication. Had she attempted to do all the painstaking detail work of a copy editor, concerning herself with the commas, the spelling, the capitalization, and the fine points of grammar, it would have been a very unprofitable use of her time. Besides, Mrs. White's schooling, limited to about three years, did not fit her for this type of work.

Ellen White customarily wrote out her messages in longhand. In only a very few instances did her secretaries take dictation from her. Many of her sermons, however, were stenographically reported.

The work of Mrs. White's secretaries was to copy the manuscripts and letters written by her own hand (typewriters were used beginning in the mid-1880's), correcting any errors in spelling or gram-mar. Repetition of subject matter was eliminated by drawing together similar statements or dropping out direct repetition. Great care was exercised not to modify or change the thoughts, and to retain Mrs. White's characteristic phraseology. The corrected and copied material was returned to Mrs. White, who would reread it and frequently rewrite certain sentences or paragraphs to give better ex-pression to the thoughts God had given to her. Recopied in its final form, the matter was again read by Mrs. White. Not until then was the manuscript ready to be mailed to the parties addressed or - in the case of a magazine article or a book - to the printers. A copy was always retained for the files in Mrs. White's office.

As to just what the literary assistants were called upon to do, we have this from one of her helpers:

The editors in no wise change Sister White's expression if it is grammatically correct, and is an evident expression of the evident thought. Sister White as human instrumentality has a pronounced style of her own, which is preserved all through her books and articles, that stamps the matter with her individuality. Many times her manuscript does not need any editing, often but slight editing, and again a great deal of literary work; but article or chapter, whatever has been done upon it, is passed back into her hands by the editor. - Fannie Bolton, in "A Confession Concerning the 'Testimony of Jesus Christ '" written in 1901.

Mrs. White's son, W. C. White, testified concerning the assistance given her, that he clearly remembered the earlier years of his mother's work in Battle Creek when his father, James White, on coming home from the Review and Herald office, would be asked to listen to what she had written, and to help in the technical preparation of such material for publication. As she read to him, her husband would comment on the matter, rejoicing in the power of the message, and pointing out any weaknesses in literary composition or faulty grammar.

Of this Mrs. White herself testified in 1906:

While my husband lived, he acted as a helper and counselor in the sending out of the messages that were given to me. We traveled extensively. Sometimes light would be given to me in the night season, sometimes in the daytime before large congregations. The instruction I received in vision was faithfully written out by me, as I had time and strength for the work. Afterward we examined the matter together, my husband correcting grammatical, errors and eliminating needless repetition. Then it was carefully copied for the persons addressed, or for the printer. - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 50.

As time went on, the making of copies of numerous individual testimonies made it necessary to employ a copyist, and the burden of grammatical correction was often laid upon the copyist. Faithful, conscientious persons were employed as literary assistants through the years.

Testimonies of Faithfulness Concerning Sister White's Assistants

Writing of the work of Marian Davis, one of her helpers, in assembling her earlier writings for use in her later books, Mrs. White made this interesting statement in 1900:

The books are not Marian's production, but my own, gathered from all my writings. Marian has a large field from which to draw, and her ability to arrange the matter is of great value to me. It saves my poring over a mass of matter, which I have no time to do. - Letter 61a, 1900; quoted in *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 60. Italics supplied.

The question may still linger in some minds as to whether, in passing through the hands of the literary assistants, the writings may not have been altered somewhat in thought, or have received additions to the thoughts of the author. This question is clearly answered by written statements from several of Mrs. White's helpers, now on file in the E. G. White Publications office.

D. E. Robinson, for many years a literary assistant, said in 1933:

In all good conscience I can testify that never was I presumptuous enough to venture to add any ideas of my own or to do other than follow with most scrupulous care the thoughts of the author.

W. C. White testified in 1900:

None of mother's workers are authorized to add to the manuscript by introducing thoughts of their own.

In the same year Miss Marian Davis wrote:

From my own knowledge of the work, as well as from the statements of Sister White herself, I have the strongest possible ground for disbelieving that such a thing [the adding of thoughts by the copyist] was done.

Miss Fannie Bolton, another of the helpers for several years, testified in 1894:

I can say that just as far as it is consistent with grammar and rhetoric, her expressions are left intact.

These clear assertions are in harmony with Mrs. White's own statement penned in 1906. After referring to the help given by her husband and others already mentioned, she declared:

As the work grew others assisted me in the preparation of matter for publication. After my husband's death, faithful helpers joined me, who labored untiringly in the work of copying the testimonies and preparing articles for publication. *But the reports that are circulated, that any of my helpers are permitted to add matter or change the meaning of the messages I write out, are not true.* -*Selected Messages*. Book I, p. 50. Italics supplied.

Mrs. White's Provision for Publication of Her Writings After Her Death

Relative to Mrs. White's concern regarding the care of her writings after her death, Arthur G. Daniells, President of the General Conference when Ellen White died in 1915, wrote thus:

Several times during the later years of her life, Mrs. E. G. White expressed to me, and to others, concern regarding the future of her writings. She was anxious that her books already in print should continue to be widely circulated, also that a proper use should be made of the unpublished manuscripts that she would leave

She said that she had received cautions indicating that the leaders might become so busy with administrative work that they could not give proper attention to the promotion of her particular writings ...

She desired and urged us to study with her what arrangements could be made, while she was still living, to ensure, after her death, the proper use of her manuscript testimonies, to promote the circulation of her books, and to bring out such new publications as would be needed from time to time. At length she was led to appoint certain ones to act for her as trustees in carrying out these wishes and responsibilities. - *Ministry*, November, 1935, p. 3.

Mrs. White's will, dated February 9, 1912, established a Board of five Trustees to serve as custodians of her property. It was to be a self-perpetuating body, and has continued through the years. Mrs. White gave specific instruction to this Board regarding the care of her published and unpublished writings.

Under the charge of this Board, for the purposes indicated, she placed (1) the files of periodicals containing about 4,500 articles from her pen; (2) her many books and pamphlets published through the years; and (3) her manuscript files containing approximately 45,000 typewritten manuscript pages and about 1,000 handwritten letters and documents. Until 1937 these materials were cared for in the office building at Mrs. White's Elmhaven home near St. Helena, California. At that time the files and work were transferred to offices provided in the headquarters building of the General Conference, in Washington, D.C. The Trustees work under the business name of The Ellen White Estate, Incorporated.

The Trustees were assigned three primary responsibilities: (1) to care for and promote the circulation of the E.G White books in English; (2) to encourage their translation and circulation in other languages and (3) to care for the E.G White papers and manuscripts and, as the needs indicated, from time to time to make and to publish compilations from articles and materials in the manuscript files.

A fourth line of work, in the field of education and public relations, has developed with the passing years. The aim of this particular phase of the work is to keep Ellen White and her work fresh in the minds of the oncoming generation of Seventh-day Adventists. To this end members of the White Publications staff have conducted classes in the Theological Seminary and its overseas extension schools, and have given series of lectures in our academies and colleges, workers' meetings, and large church gatherings.

How the Trustees Have Made Ellen White Materials Available

The Trustees have accomplished much since Mrs. White's death in 1915, including:

Gathering materials for and publishing several compilations in English, making generally available in permanent form much detailed E. G. White counsel in certain areas not so fully covered in the books published previous to Mrs. White's death. These volumes cover many areas of Christian life and service; e.g. *Temperance*, *Colporteur Ministry*, *Welfare Ministry*, *Evangelism*, *Counsels on Stewardship*, *The Adventist Home*, *Child Guidance*, *Selected Messages*, etc.

Take the book *Evangelism* as an example. Through the years Mrs. White received much instruction for those engaged in evangelistic work. This she faithfully wrote out, and placed in the hands of those directly concerned, - Elders Haskell, Daniells, Farnsworth, Simpson, Starr, etc. These counsels pointed out dangers, exposed faulty methods of labor, gave encouragement, and directed to the most effective methods. The men who originally received these communications in the form of typewritten manuscripts, prized them highly, and their work was largely molded by this instruction. The young men who were trained under them also benefited.

But as time went on, the older men passed from the stage of action. Today's evangelists were not trained under those men; and the counsels sent in typewritten form to the earlier workmen were largely lost from sight or knowledge. At the time the testimonies relating to evangelism were written, the number of evangelists was small, and there was no demand for the publication of a book devoted just to this topic. However, we have today twenty evangelists where at that time there was only one. Should not this greatly enlarged group have the benefit of the counsels sent to their predecessors? It was to make this possible that *Evangelism* was published in 1946.

Most of the content of works compiled since Mrs. White's death has been drawn from periodical articles and from detailed counsels presented in unpublished manuscripts. To round out the presentation, and make each volume a complete work on its particular topic, small portions have sometimes been extracted from published works.

Books of more recent issuance include *Selected Messages*, Books I and II, a most helpful collection of counsels "buried" in rare and out-of-print pamphlets and brochures, as well as particularly forceful periodical articles, and testimonies drawn from manuscript sources.

All books compiled since Mrs. White's death have been prepared as nearly as possible in the same way that such works were done during the last few years of her life. As the materials are assembled, no changes are made in the text, and no connecting thoughts are inserted to join the several excerpts. The Trustees can only select the counsels, and arrange them as seems best for convenient use. The promotion of the E. G. White books around the world includes encouragement of translation and publication in many countries. *Steps to Christ* has been printed in 83 languages; *Great Controversy*, in 30; and many other books in a dozen or so. Circulation of the E. G. White books among Seventh-day Adventists and non-Adventists has run into many millions of copies.

A set of ten E. G. White books, known as the Jesus Project, is being published in English and also translated into other leading languages of the world.

Will Additional E. G. White Books Yet Appear?

No one knows what the demand of the future may be, but it appears to the Trustees that further copies of the writings or compilations may still be published. It has ever been the purpose of the Trustees and of the General Conference leaders to supply to the church the full counsels given through Ellen White.

There are in the vault of the White Publications in Washington, D.C., a number of still-unpublished letters and manuscripts. These are unpublished because they deal largely or wholly with local situations or personal experiences of individual church members or families. Also, over a period of seventy years' writing, the same lines of counsel were repeated again and again. Subjects presented in these materials which are of lasting value to the church have been fully treated in the currently available published works. To go over the same ground again would be repetitious.

The question is sometimes asked, "Are there important unpublished E. G. White messages of vital interest to the church which are being held in the White Estate vault to be released at some momentous time?"

There are no such materials in the White Estate vault. The Board of Trustees, in counsel with the leaders of the church, have conscientiously endeavored to make available to the church, in the several books published since Mrs. White's death, all lines of counsel which would be of service. All significant prophetic utterances known to the Trustees, having to do with last day events, have been published, that all may read and be benefited thereby. The Trustees have no desire to withhold instruction which would serve the church in these critical last days. Nor has such material been withheld.

Conclusion as to Origin of the E. G. White Books

As God's messenger, Mrs. White, and Mrs. White alone, was responsible for the writing of her books. In 1902 she wrote concerning the source of light presented in her books:

Sister White is not the originator of these books. They contain the instruction that during her lifework God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously given His servant to be given to the world. From their pages this light is to shine into the hearts of men and women, leading them to the Saviour. - *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 125.

Shall we not, with profound gratitude, give thanks to God who, through the Spirit of Prophecy - His chosen means of communication - has illuminated the pathway to heaven with precious light!

Lesson 20 is entitled, "Integrity and Timeliness of the Prophetic Messages." It will answer such questions as-

- Could Mrs. White be influenced in her writing?
- How did the providential timing of the messages strengthen confidence?