

Ellen G White - The Writer

Ellen White made a remarkable contribution to the world of literature. Her prolific pen spilled forth 25 million words and 100,000 printed and handwritten pages that formed more than 5,000 periodical articles and 49 books. She is, according to one researcher's probe into the Library of Congress, the fourth most translated author in the history of literature. In addition, she is the most translated American author of either gender.

Her work encompassed a range of subjects including religion, education, health, social relationships, evangelism, prophecy, publishing, and nutrition. Her life-changing masterpiece on practical Christianity, *Steps to Christ*, has been published in more than 150 languages with well over 100 million copies in circulation. Her crowning literary achievement is the five-volume "Conflict of the Ages" series, which chronicles the war between good and evil from beginning to end.

Of course, it's true that quantity is not quality, that prolific writing is not necessarily good writing. Perhaps that's what is so remarkable about the writing of Ellen White — it is both abundant and skillfully crafted. Her writing is characterized by substantive quality that sets her apart from most pens.

Her writing is profound and yet practical, spiritual and yet sensible, dramatic without sensationalism and warm without being syrupy. Readers experience peace of mind and a reassurance of soul, which tends toward sensible, moral, and compassionate living. Simply put, the love of God shines through her words.

Literary Miracle

How could all this come from a person who wasn't college-trained or who had not even completed a basic formal education? It would be difficult to say that Ellen's remarkable literary production was merely a product of human invention. Indeed, her contemporaries, knowing her background and minimal education, also knew that more than human wisdom was responsible for her commanding eloquence in print or in public speaking..

What did Ellen say about her writing? As always, she gave the glory to God: "The Lord has said, 'Write out the things which I shall give you.' And I commenced when very young to do this work. My hand that was feeble and trembling because of infirmities became steady as soon as I took the pen in my hand, and since those first writings I have been able to write. God has given me the ability to write. . . . The right hand scarcely ever has a disagreeable sensation. It never wearies. It seldom ever trembles."

Like those who wrote the Bible, Ellen drew her words from within the literary, historical, social, and religious context of her time. Moreover, her extensive reading and travel experiences added to the weight and wealth of her thought.

Contemporary issues also determined the emphasis and frequency about what she wrote. For example, she saw profound implications for understanding last-day events as she noted politico-religious activity in her time, yet was able to write in such a way as to give far-future readers substantial understanding in their spiritual lives.

A Small Sample

Before diving deeper into her specific works, let's sample some of her most eloquent passages. The first is from ***The Desire of Ages***, her magnum opus on the life of Christ:

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ... In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love.”

These words about relationships come from her book ***The Ministry of Healing***:

“Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate, and see as little as possible of their errors and failings. When tempted to complain of what someone has said or done, praise something in that person's life or character.”

Enjoy this profound insight into the science of prayer from her most translated book, ***Steps to Christ***:

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary, in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.”

And from her classic on the teachings of Christ, ***Christ's Object Lessons***:

“Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul.”

Courageous Social Insight

Literary excellence was not Ellen White's only asset as a writer. She was a provocative social commentator and moral leader well ahead of her day. Consider her words on racial equality, written, amazingly, during the time of slavery:

“Christ died for the whole human family, whether black or white. God has made man a free moral agent, whether white or black. The institution of slavery does away with this and permits man to exercise over his fellow man a power which God has never granted him, and which belongs alone to God ... those who have dared chain down the body and the soul of the slave, to keep him in degradation like the brutes, will have their retribution.”

Also ahead of her time were her views on gender equality:

“Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.”

Long before the health benefits of a plant-based diet were proven by science, she wrote:

“In grains, fruits, nuts and vegetables are to be found all the food elements that we need. If we come to the Lord in simplicity of mind, He will teach us how to prepare wholesome food free from the taint of flesh meat.”

These statements reveal only a tiny sample of this extraordinary author, who Paul Harvey believed should be honored alongside Martha Washington and Emily Dickenson. He said of Ellen, “Only now is the world coming to appreciate her recommended prescription for optimum spiritual and physical health ... Ellen White! You don’t know her? Get to know her.”

Steps to Christ

Composed of just 13 short chapters, Ellen White’s life-changing masterpiece on practical Christianity, *Steps to Christ*, has been published in more than 150 languages with well over 100 million copies in circulation. Since its first edition in 1892, it has brought inspiration to millions of readers and seekers around the world.

Its purpose is to point readers to Jesus Christ, who alone can provide unending joy and relief from the pains of a world gone mad with evil. While encouraging both doubters and seekers to embrace the teachings of Jesus and join with Him through a saving relationship, it also teaches how to survive and thrive as God’s people in a sin-filled world.

Readers from around the world have been impressed by this book to better understand God’s love for humanity, our need of Jesus and His Holy Spirit for overcoming doubt, spiritual growth, faith and acceptance, and much more. It not only presents God’s plan of salvation — forgiving grace — this book encourages readers to trust God’s promises of empowering grace whereby self-destroying, self-centered habits can be overcome by new, Christ-reflecting habits.

As one publisher notes, “Never has the pathway to Jesus Christ, to enter a personal relationship with Him, been made so clear, as through this remarkable volume. ... Aside from the Bible, no book ever written has shown so unmistakably how to become, and then remain, a Christian.”

Conflict of the Ages

The "Conflict of the Ages," a series of five commentaries penned by Ellen White, is one of the most insightful and beautifully written works about the Bible ever produced.

These five-volumes, covering the breadth of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, have made God’s Word come alive for millions of readers in a way that is both refreshing and solidly grounded in biblical truth. These biblical characters and lessons come to life as each chapter shares practical and life-changing principles that can be applied to the challenges of everyday life.

The five books include:

Patriarchs and Prophets: The story of the conflict of good and evil from its beginning, starting with the origin of evil, the creation of the world, the biblical patriarchs, Israel’s bondage and exodus, and their establishment in Canaan up to the time of David.

Prophets and Kings continues the story from the time of Solomon through the remaining kings of Israel and Judah and the times of the prophets, down to the coming of the Messiah, providing an extraordinary look at the unity of the Holy Bible.

The Desire of Ages is Ellen White's classic masterpiece on the life and ministry of Jesus, following His birth, ministry, and death and resurrection in a profoundly moving and insightful way.

The Acts of the Apostles presents the story of the early Christian church through the rest of New Testament times, exploring the miracles and controversies that shaped God's people after the ascension of Jesus Christ.

The Great Controversy picks up the story at the destruction of Jerusalem and follows, in a broad outline, the major issues of the conflict between Christ and Satan as they have been seen in the history of the Christian church down to our own day and beyond.

Her Other Works

Although Ellen White's many works are too numerous to list here, you can discover the scope and breadth of her life-work in the following publications:

Christ's Object Lessons presents the parables of Jesus in a fresh light, showing their application to Christian living today. Ellen plumbs the depths of the best-loved teachings of Jesus. Some say that this book is the most challenging theological book ever written and yet the simplest to understand.

Education deals with the unique and challenging idea that "the work of education and the work of redemption are one." The ultimate goal of all learning should be to understand more about our Creator-Redeemer and to reflect that understanding in our personal lives. This unique perspective outlining the goals and practicum of education from a child's earliest years to that of a university graduate has been a best seller for 100 years.

The Ministry of Healing provides a well-rounded look at the principles of healthful living, beginning with the ministry of Jesus and extending to the life and ministry of every Christian.

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing is a rich commentary on the greatest sermon ever preached. It offers a study and commentary on the key verses of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, including the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. In particular, in practical terms, it emphasizes how to live here on earth with our fellow man so that we can be entrusted with eternal life.

Testimonies for the Church, in nine volumes, shares counsel from Ellen White containing spiritual guidance of a general nature and covering a wide variety of situations—including many letters written personally to members of the church.

This is the end of the "Published Works" section. But you can still keep learning!