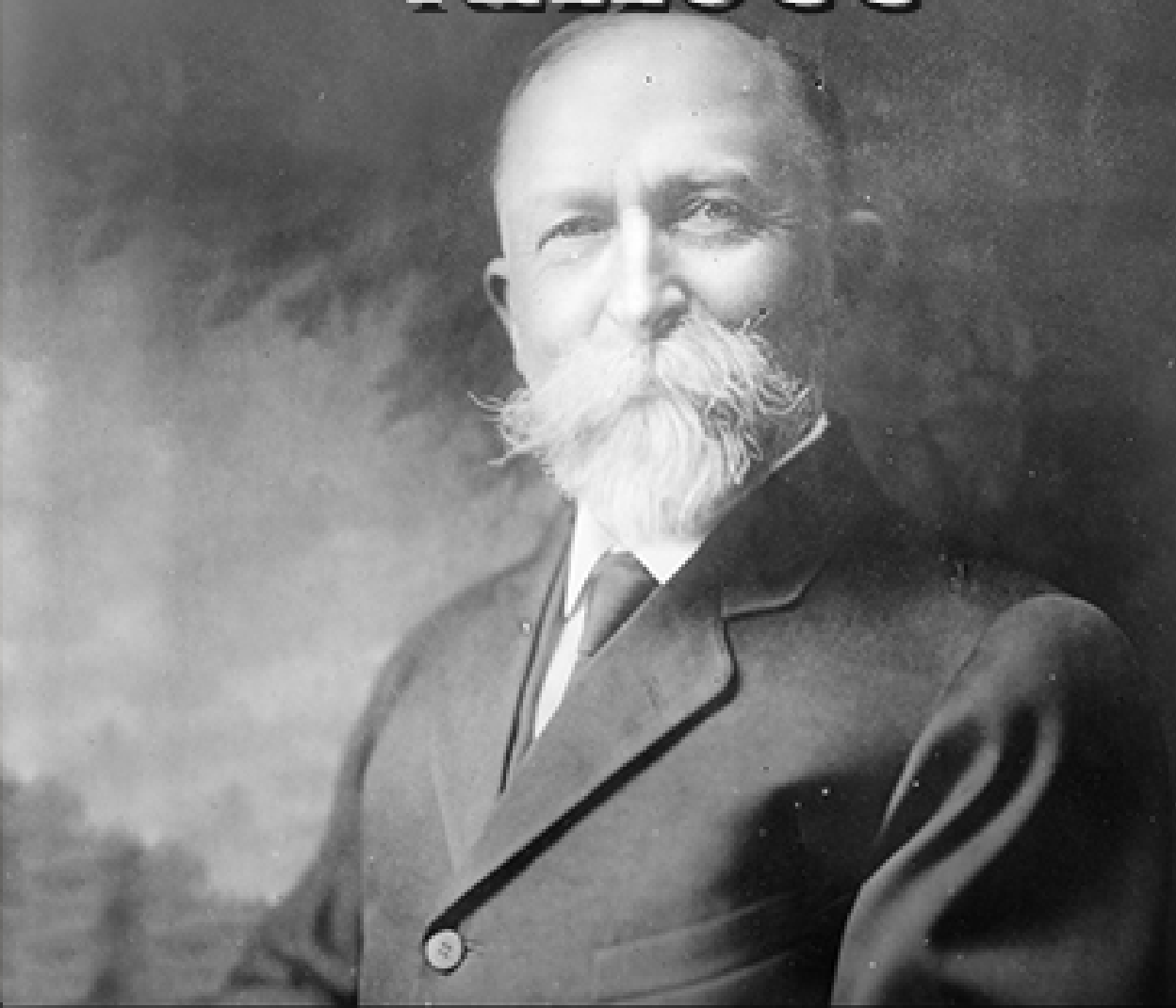


ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

THE 1907
INTERVIEW WITH
JOHN HARVEY
KELLOGG



TIM POIRIER

The 1907 Interview with John Harvey Kellogg

Ellen G. White

**Copyright © 2018
Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.**

Information about this Book

Overview

This eBook is provided by the [Ellen G. White Estate](#). It is included in the larger free [Online Books](#) collection on the Ellen G. White Estate Web site.

About the Author

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

Further Links

[A Brief Biography of Ellen G. White](#)
[About the Ellen G. White Estate](#)

End User License Agreement

The viewing, printing or downloading of this book grants you only a limited, nonexclusive and nontransferable license for use solely by you for your own personal use. This license does not permit republication, distribution, assignment, sublicense, sale, preparation of derivative works, or other use. Any unauthorized use of this book terminates the license granted hereby.

Further Information

For more information about the author, publishers, or how you can support this service, please contact the Ellen G. White Estate at mail@whiteestate.org. We are thankful for your interest and feedback and wish you God's blessing as you read.

by Tim Poirier

Contents

Information about this Book	i
Two Basic Charges	vi
The College View Bakery Experience.....	viii
The Second Charge	xii

In 1907, shortly before Dr. J. H. Kellogg was disfellowshipped from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, two elders from the Battle Creek church, in which the Doctor held membership, conducted an eight-hour interview with him. The object of the interview was to ascertain whether Dr. Kellogg wished to continue his association with the Seventh-day Adventist church, working in harmony with its mission, or, as it had been rumored, if he would be “rather pleased to have the church drop [his] name.” The transcript of the interview reveals that Dr. Kellogg took this opportunity to justify his actions and attitudes toward the church’s leadership, and, principally, Ellen White.

By the time of this interview Ellen White had already openly withdrawn her support for Kellogg’s program and denounced his philosophies, after years of attempting to rescue him from mismanagement and dangerous theological tendencies. This history is traced throughout volumes five and six of the E. G. White Biography.

While Kellogg publicly maintained his acceptance of Ellen White’s prophetic gift, he could not at the same time acknowledge the truthfulness of the testimonies of warning that were circulated concerning him. Therefore, the interview consists largely of incidents as told by Dr. Kellogg to illustrate his basic position regarding Ellen White’s authority: First, that not everything that went out over her signature is authentic revelation or testimony; second, that conspiring leaders often misinformed her and manipulated her writings to suit their aims. [2]

Dr. Kellogg also attacked the integrity of other church leaders, notably, W. C. White, A. G. Daniells, and W. W. Prescott. To be sure, the church leaders were not above reproach in all their dealings with Kellogg. Ellen White had words of reproof to some who were exhibiting unchristian attitudes toward him. No doubt those she named could point to similar defects in the Doctor’s character. It is important to remember, however, that the interview provides only Dr. Kellogg’s side of the rift between the parties involved.

Two Basic Charges

This paper is not an attempt to justify the actions of church leaders in their dealings with Kellogg, nor to refute Kellogg's defense of his personal theology. Rather, it considers the implications of the two basic charges Dr. Kellogg brought against Ellen White and her work. The many incidents related by Kellogg, as they pertain to Ellen White, essentially fall under one or the other of these two headings: First, Is everything written by Ellen White an inspired revelation? Second, Can her writings be trusted to accurately represent the Lord's message?

The first question is answered straightforwardly by Ellen White herself. She wrote:

There are times when common things must be stated, common thoughts must occupy the mind, common letters must be written and information given that has passed from one to another of the workers. Such words, such information, are not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God.—[Selected Messages 1:39](#)

[3] Clearly, Ellen White recognized that not everything she wrote was to be regarded as inspired. This answer leads logically to another question: How can we know what is intended as revelation and what is merely Ellen White's opinion?

Ellen White offers certain guidelines in helping us to arrive at an answer to this question (see [Selected Messages 1:38-39](#)), yet it would be dangerous, if not impossible, to set forth a rule that would always separate special revelation from personal opinion. For example, into what category would one place counsel given to meet a current crisis that was based upon divine instruction received during a similar but different situation? In such a case, inspired wisdom would be involved, although no new revelation had been given for that particular occasion.

As complex as some aspects of this question may seem, there need be no uncertainty regarding the many testimonies from Ellen White that clearly indicate the source of her information. Such expressions as, “I was shown...” or “From the light given me of God...” or “You were represented to me as...” leave little room for doubt concerning the authority being claimed. Yet, in this 1907 interview, Dr. Kellogg would lead the reader to suppose that even messages bearing claims such as these might be based on nothing more than mistaken rumor.

As evidence for his position, Dr. Kellogg referred to several instances where testimonies were received that he and others believed were contrary to the facts. The stories, as he related them, sound quite convincing. In attempting to verify them, however, we find his credibility becomes suspect. One of the obstacles in documenting his claims is the fact that very few written records were referred to; most of the incidents involved conversations (“I said,” “he said,” “they said,” etc.), where the witnesses quoted cannot defend themselves against misquotation or misinterpretation. We have only Dr. Kellogg’s testimony as to what was said. [4]

In those instances where records exist and attempts have been made to document events, we find a mixture of truth, half-truths, misrepresentation, and, often, exaggeration. On some points, his account is correct. For example, Dr. Kellogg maintained that he never received the testimony published in Series B, No. 6, pp. 5-10, before it appeared in print. So far as the records show, that was what happened, because of an oversight by Ellen White’s staff. But Dr. Kellogg emphatically charged that a particular paragraph of the article was “interpolated” or inserted into the original manuscript at the time of publication to make it appear that he had acted against divine counsel.

The White Estate is fortunate to possess the original writing of that article, and while it is evident that Ellen White’s literary assistants rearranged material as they often did in preparing the final copy, every paragraph found in the published copy can be found in the original diary entry—refuting positively a charge Dr. Kellogg presented as fact.

The College View Bakery Experience

[5] An illustration of what is involved in verifying one of Kellogg's stories, as well as how the selected presentation of facts can misrepresent the actual turn of events, is the Doctor's account of the College View Bakery.

As Kellogg told the story, when Union College was started, permission was sought from the Battle Creek Sanitarium to open a bakery with selling privileges to everyone west of the Mississippi River. This permission was granted with the mutual understanding that if a sanitarium was started there later, the bakery business would be turned over to that sanitarium. Later a sanitarium was, in fact, started, and Kellogg wrote to the General Conference Association explaining the agreement and asking for control of the bakery. The G.C.A. appointed a committee which made its report to the effect that the bakery should be turned over according to agreement.

Kellogg related that when N. W. Kauble, the new president of the College, looked at the situation, he felt that the Nebraska Sanitarium had no right to receive the profits in as much as the College was running the entire program. After laboring unsuccessfully with the local committee, Kellogg took the issue back to the General Conference, and asked the secretary to find the original resolution. Upon finding the previous action, the issue was settled. Only Morrison, Santee, and Westphal voted against the decision.

[6] Kellogg reported in the interview that he met S. N. Haskell shortly after this meeting and asked him what he thought about the situation. Haskell replied, "Of course you are right about that, they ought to do what they agreed: the sanitarium food business belongs to the Sanitarium." Kellogg then made a "prediction" to Haskell that Santee would write to Mrs. White telling her the same misinformation he had been circulating, and that he would soon receive a testimony condemning him for his attitude and demanding that he turn the bakery back to the College.

According to Kellogg, in less than three months a testimony came saying, “You have robbed the College View College.... The General Conference should have been ashamed to have allowed you to intimidate them. One was present and heard your threatening words.” Kellogg was commanded to turn the bakery over, and the General Conference was commanded to rescind its action, but neither it nor he ever tried to reverse the situation, because they all saw the inequity of the testimony. Kellogg protested to Mrs. White about the testimony, and W. C. White told him, “I don’t think you will ever hear anything more about it.” Kellogg ended his story by saying that that was indeed the last he had heard about it, nor did anyone else ever do anything about it.

Unlike many of the other incidents Kellogg related in his interview, this story deals with a number of events and communications that lend themselves to verification. A full discussion with documentation is available from the E. G. White Estate (see “The College View Bakery Issue”), but we will here only summarize the results of comparing Kellogg’s version against the historical record.

Kellogg is correct in stating that the General Conference stood behind his claims in 1900 when it re-affirmed its previous resolution in 1895 to return the profits of the bakery to the Sanitarium. But what he selectively omitted in his story is the fact that when Bauble became administrator of the College and pressed the bakery ownership issue in 1898, a committee re-studied the question and recommended “that the former [1895] action of the General Conference Association giving the profits of the College View Bakery to the Nebraska Sanitarium be rescinded, in compliance with the requests presented by the brethren representing District No. 4, unless satisfactory arrangements can be made with the Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association to divide the profits between the Nebraska Sanitarium and Union College.” [7]

The minutes reveal that Kellogg came into the meeting at that point and made a speech against the motion—claiming the Sanitarium’s right to the profits. Nevertheless, the motion carried. Apparently this action was not brought into the discussion in 1900 when Kellogg again pressed his claims; certainly, he did not bring it up in his interview, giving the impression that there was no doubt about the agreement. Having only the 1895 action, which Kellogg asked

the General Conference secretary to find, it is understandable why the committee felt that the only fair thing to do would be to honor the original resolution. And anyone unaware of the 1898 rescission would have to agree with Kellogg's argument—including S. N. Haskell.

[8] Kellogg surmised that Santee wrote to Mrs. White, which he did, giving an account of the meeting and substantiating his appeal by including copies of the previous General Conference actions. The next month Ellen White addressed the first of several communications to Kellogg in which she reproved him for his attitude toward the control of the Bakery.

The fact that the 1895 action had been rescinded upon re-study of the question sheds a considerably different light upon the charge that Ellen White's testimony was misguided. But Kellogg claimed more. He stated that the leaders balked at doing anything about the testimony because they all saw its injustice. The facts are that the General Conference leaders had intense confrontations with Kellogg over this and related issues, and that a solution to the ownership controversy was worked out between the parties involved without any need for General Conference intervention. (See paper referred to for documentation.) As for Ellen White, she never retracted the truthfulness of her testimony. Speaking of Kellogg's visits with her, she wrote:

He gave me his account of the scene at the meeting at College View. He presented things contrary to the way in which they had been presented to me by the Lord. He related matters as if he were the one who had been wronged. I said, "The Lord has instructed me in regard to that matter. When I am convinced that it is the Lord's will for me to change my opinions, I will let you know." ... "I wish you to understand, Dr. Kellogg, that every word that I have written to you in regard to that scene, is correct." But he would not accept the way in which I presented the matter as being correct, and I would not accept his statement.... There the matter stands. But every word of the presentation regarding the scene at College View is true.—Lt 160, 1902.

The fact that Ellen White many times received initial information about events in the church from human sources, such as letters or conversations, caused great difficulty in Dr. Kellogg's mind in accepting her *counsels* as from the Lord. Kellogg seemed unable to recognize the difference between the source of her facts and the Source of her counsels. This formed the basis for much of his criticism of Ellen White's authority. In none of the letters she wrote to Kellogg about the bakery issue did she claim that the information that the meeting was held came by revelation, but she did claim that the *counsel* reproving his actions came from "One of great dignity." [9]

When challenged on this question earlier in her ministry, Ellen White pointed to the letters Paul wrote after receiving reports of problems in the churches. She explained that although "the Lord had not given him a new revelation for that special time. ... The reproof he sent them was written just as much under the inspiration of the Spirit of God as were any of his epistles." Yet, some took the position that "he had merely given them his opinion as a man" ([Testimonies for the Church 5:65-66](#)).

The Second Charge

The other recurring charge of Dr. Kellogg was that others interfered with and often manipulated Ellen White's writings so that they could not be trusted to represent her positions accurately. He particularly faulted W. C. White for exercising too much control over his mother's work, citing instances where testimonies were withheld. In these cases Kellogg either did not believe or did not know that permission was asked of Ellen White, and her consent given, before such actions were taken.

[10] Undoubtedly, some people misused Ellen White's testimonies as a club to whip the Doctor into line, as some continue to misuse her writings today. A few leaders clearly were engaged in a campaign to overthrow him. But to imply that testimonies were concocted, or that Ellen White was not responsible for what went out of her office over her signature, is a serious charge—one that is unsupportable.

To accept Kellogg's position is to accept the irrational conclusion that although the Lord was concerned enough to convey a message to His prophet, He was willing to allow others to manipulate His messenger to the extent that the message, when delivered, was untrustworthy. Yet that is the only possible conclusion one can come to if one refuses to accept the content of her messages. The unfortunate thing is that Kellogg made his declarations so emphatically that one tends to feel he must be telling the truth.

For example, Kellogg could hardly have stated it more forcefully when he maintained that W. C. White "manufactured" a "testimony" from Ellen White's personal letters charging Kellogg with trying to gain control over the Battle Creek Tabernacle. Kellogg admitted that it was signed by W. C. White, but said it was drawn from personal letters to give the impression that what was said was revelation from the Lord. He stated, "Those were private letters to private persons, every one of them, and in not a single instance did she say, 'The Lord has shown me this.'"

In actuality, the document prepared by W. C. White was introduced as “Extracts from Letters written by Mrs. E. G. White,” and contained no less than three expressions indicating that she had divine enlightenment as to what she was writing, including this statement: “I have seen that the leaders in the medical work in Battle Creek will try to secure possession of the Tabernacle”—written in a personal letter, yes, but revealing a higher Source for her information. [11]

Whether Kellogg was simply ignorant of the facts or was deliberately trying to mislead, we may never know. But it should keep anyone who reads his interview from uncritically accepting as fact even his most bold assertions.

What should be learned from this interview? One might devote considerable time in investigating each and every charge made by Dr. Kellogg; and, if enough documentation could be found, it is possible that on some points he might be shown to be correct. On the other hand, one might find additional instances where he would be proved entirely mistaken. But in the final analysis, our faith in the Lord’s guidance of the Seventh-day Adventist movement—in spite of its mistakes—and our confidence in the Lord’s messages through Ellen White—in spite of her humanness, must be grounded, not on any one person’s testimony, but on a comparison with the testimony of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. “God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence” ([Testimonies for the Church 3:255](#)).

Ellen G. White Estate

March 17, 1987