many years before this handbook will need to be updated. Still, if I only had one book on the first six Christian centuries, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* would be that book.

Anders University

John W. Reeve


This book is an attempt to provide a “layman’s point of view” about the pivotal conclusions from the Life of Christ Research Project (1983-1988) headed by Fred Veltman, who was at the time a professor at Pacific Union College. The primary author, E. Marcella Anderson King, was a secretary and later research assistant to J. Paul Stauffer and Veltman. Her manuscript was brought to fruition through the editorial work of coauthor Kevin L. Morgan, a Seventh-day Adventist minister living in North Carolina. Together the two authors put together an apologetic work aimed at undermining critics of Ellen G. White’s life and ministry, who claim that White maliciously plagiarized her writings from other contemporary sources. Although the Life of Christ Research Project has been completed for almost two decades, King states that “few Adventists have heard much about it and what they have heard is often distorted” (9).

In chapter 1, the authors highlight White’s lifelong desire to produce a thorough treatment on the life of Christ, along with an overview by her literary assistants. Chapter 2 argues that the charges of plagiarism and misuse of sources by White’s critics need to be answered. However, the section, which is only two pages long, hardly deserves to be considered a chapter and does not do justice in analyzing what these charges are.

Chapter 3 is a marked-up and annotated version of chapter 1 of *The Desire of Ages*. The real value of King and Morgan’s efforts is found in their highlighting of the adaptations White and her assistants made when using and reusing her earlier writings as well as the adaptations they made of other authors’ material. The pattern is repeated in chapter 5, which is an analysis of chapter 2 of *The Desire of Ages*, and chapter 6, an analysis of chapter 77 of *The Desire of Ages*. At the end of chapters 3, 4, and 6 are brief analyses (56-58, 62, 111) that the authors expand in chapter 7 in their evaluation of White’s use of sources.

The authors shy away from the term “borrowing” to describe White’s literary use of other authors. Instead they point to her own description of how “gems of thought are to be gathered up and redeemed from their companionship with error” (*Review and Herald*, October 23, 1894, cited on 118). “Some thought gems’ required very little adapting. . . . Others required considerably more” (119). Although there are “recognizable parallels scattered through the rest of Ellen White’s writings,” the colorful examples provided by King and Morgan indicate that she used a wide variety of sources in the writing of *The
Desire of Ages (127) from not only other writers on the life of Christ, but also reused materials from her earlier manuscripts and from Scripture. In chapter 8, the authors examine issues of “legality, ethics, and integrity” by defining plagiarism, “fair use,” and the allegation that White denied that she borrowed from others (an accusation that the authors easily refute). In chapter 9, the authors examine the nature of inspiration, and in the final chapter they give concluding statements. The ultimate test, for Morgan, is whether The Desire of Ages leads an individual to “a life-changing encounter with Jesus!” (164).

There is little doubt that one of the most frequently asked questions about the life and ministry of White is the matter of literary borrowing. King and Morgan do a service to the church by presenting a simple and colorful analysis of White’s use of literary sources. One minor criticism is that the book could be better organized, and in spite of Morgan’s contribution, editorial and historical mistakes abound. I frequently found the book to be rambling with sporadic conclusions. Nevertheless, while this volume will be helpful for the teacher of Adventist Studies, I would continue to recommend that the serious student consult Veltman’s abbreviated summary of The Life of Christ Research Project, which is now available on the General Conference Archives web site (www.adventistarchives.org).

Montrose, Colorado

MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL


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