

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

SOLA SCRIPTURA



- ❖ DB—Could we be guilty in quoting and using EGW as an “addendum” to the Word of God and counting her among the inspired prophets of Holy Writ? Are her writings then also “infallible?”
- ❖ We are to try to spirits. 1 John 4.
- ❖ Ellen White called herself a messenger, not a prophet:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

Some have stumbled over the fact that I said I did not claim to be a prophet and they have asked, Why is this?

I have had no claims to make, only that *I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger*; that he called me in my youth to be his messenger, to receive his word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Saviour declared me to be his messenger. (*RH* July 26, 1906, par. 3-5)

DB—The scriptures do say that there will be among the gifts of the Spirit given be that of “prophecy”. How do we judge the verity of those words of prophecy? According to scripture only, correct? So if we find anything that does not line up, “there is no truth in it”, would that mean the entirety of what they had written? One drop of poison in the cup makes the whole cup not safe. Is this “going beyond” the intent of Sola Scriptura to take the writings of ANY other prophet as equal to the Word?

God does not expect the Christian to be gullible; instead, God bestows on the church the gift of distinguishing between true and false spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10). The messages of people who claim to be speaking for God should be tested by the word of God. The Bereans studied the Scriptures to see if Paul was teaching truth. Paul advised his hearers to prove all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We must apply the test of the word of God to everything we read and hear.

The fact that prophets were called “holy men of God” (2 Peter 1:21) neither means they were sinless nor prevents us from recognizing their weaknesses as human beings. Any attempt to make the Biblical prophets “perfect” will be confronted by the Bible record itself. Think of King David. Though he was a prophet, he committed gross sins. When his relationship with God was broken by sin, God sent another prophet to correct His servant (2 Sam. 12:1–13). After David’s repentance the way of communication was once again open, and he was inspired to write the beautiful psalm of confession (Ps. 51). We should not build our confidence in the Biblical prophets on the basis of the prophets’ perfect record. Neither should we do so with a modern prophet--the authority of the prophetic word is not based upon a perfect life or perfect behavior. Ellen White never claimed perfection or infallibility. “In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible. His Word is true, and in Him is no variableness, or shadow of turning.” From her diaries and personal letters, we know that sometimes she was discouraged; sometimes she had disagreements with her husband; many times she had to ask forgiveness; she made mistakes.

(Selected Messages, book 1, p. 370)

DB—There are so many versions that have attempted to restate the plain Word of God. But then which version is the best one to use?

The New Testament was translated using the Textus Receptus (Received Text) series of Greek texts. For the Old Testament, the Masoretic Hebrew text was used . . . ([https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/kjv_texts/#:~:text=The New Testament was translated,Septuagint text was used primarily](https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/kjv_texts/#:~:text=The%20New%20Testament%20was%20translated,Septuagint%20text%20was%20used%20primarily))

The task of translation was undertaken by 47 scholars. The scholars worked in six committees, two based in each of the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, and Westminster. The committees included scholars with Puritan sympathies, as well as high churchmen. Forty unbound copies of the 1602 edition of the Bishops' Bible were specially printed so that the agreed changes of each committee could be recorded in the margins.

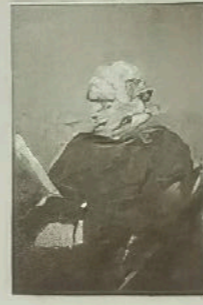
THE REVISERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT 1881



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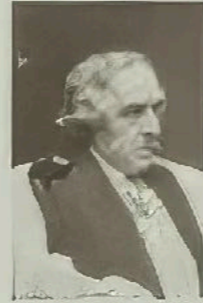
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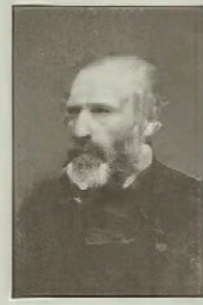
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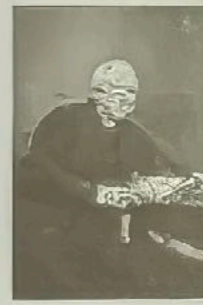
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The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions, but on the man himself, who under the influence of the Holy Ghost is imbued with thoughts. But the words and thoughts receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the Word of God. (*4LtMs*, Ms 24, 1886, par. 9, 10)

The ten commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not of human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. (Introduction to *GC*)

Truth Triumphant, Chapter 5, B. G. Wilkinson

Our Authorized Bible Vindicated, B. G. Wilkinson

Replying to your letter of
October 13 regarding the
doctrine of the Trinity, I will
say that Seventh-day
Adventists do not and never
have accepted the dark,
mysterious Catholic
doctrine of the Trinity.
(Benjamin G. Wilkinson's
letter to Dr. D. S. Teters,
November 3, 1936)



Vince—For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18–19)

DB—Perhaps then we should only use the Old Testament and the Words of Jesus alone as our Scriptures? Or did God sanction the NT disciples as being included as part of His “holy prophets” to add their testimony to Scripture? Were all their writings completed before the end of Jewish probation in AD 70?

Historical Setting. Modern scholars are divided as to whether the writing of the Revelation should be assigned to a comparatively early date during the reign of Nero (AD 54–68; see Vol. VI, p. 81) or to that of Vespasian (AD 69–79; see Vol. VI, p. 86), or to a later date toward the end of the reign of Domitian (AD 81–96; see Vol. VI, p. 86). (*SDA BC*)

“The Guide Book”

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Autumn of 1888

This is a time when the question with all propriety may be asked, “When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8.)

Spiritual darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. There are in many churches skepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures, and human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days. (5LtMs, Ms 16, 1888, par. 1-2)

This Holy Book has stood the assaults of Satan, who has united with evil men to make everything of divine character shrouded in clouds and darkness. But the Lord has preserved this Holy Book by His own miraculous power in its present shape—a chart or guide book to the human family to show them the way to heaven.

But the Oracles of God have been so manifestly neglected that there are but a few in our world, even of those who profess to explain it to others, who have the divine knowledge of the Scriptures. There are learned men who have a college education, but these shepherds do not feed the flock of God. They do not consider that the excellencies of the Scriptures will be continually unfolding their hidden treasures as precious jewels are discovered by digging for them. (*Ibid.*, par. 3-4)

There are men who strive to be original, who are wise above what is written; therefore their wisdom is foolishness. They discover wonderful things in advance, ideas which reveal that they are far behind in the comprehension of the Divine will and purposes of God.

In seeking to make plain or to unravel mysteries hid from ages from mortal man, they are like a man floundering about in the mud, unable to extricate himself, and yet telling others how to get out of the muddy sea they themselves are in. This is a fit representation of the men who set themselves to correct the errors of the Bible. No man can improve the Bible by suggesting what the Lord meant to say or ought to have said.
(*Ibid.*, par. 5–6)

Some look to us gravely and say, “Don’t you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?” This all is probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the inspired Word because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God. Yes, they would just as easily stumble over plain facts that the common mind will accept and discern the Divine, and to which God’s utterance is plain and beautiful, full of marrow and fatness. All the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul or cause any feet to stumble that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth.

(Ibid., par. 7)

God committed the preparation of His divinely inspired Word to finite man. This Word, arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the Guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them, that by studying and obeying the directions not one soul would lose its way to heaven.

Those who think to make the supposed difficulties of Scriptures plain, in measuring by their finite rule that which is inspired and that which is not inspired, had better cover their faces as Elijah [did] when the still small voice spoke to him; for they are in the presence of God and holy angels, who for ages have communicated to men light and knowledge, telling them what to do and what not to do unfolding before them scenes of thrilling interest, waymark by waymark in symbols and signs and illustrations. (*Ibid.*, par. 8–9)

And He [God] has not, while presenting the perils clustering about the last days, qualified any finite man to unravel hidden mysteries or inspired one man or any class of men to pronounce judgment as to that which is inspired or is not. When men, in their finite judgement, find it necessary to go into an examination of Scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us. (*Ibid.*, par. 10)

I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible. Men arise who think they find something to criticize in God's Word. They lay it bare before others as evidence of superior wisdom. These men are, many of them, smart men, learned men; they have eloquence and talent, the whole lifework [of whom] is to unsettle minds in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures. They influence many to see as they do. And the same work is passed on from one to another, just as Satan designed it should be, until we may see the full meaning of the words of Christ, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. (*Ibid.*, par. 11)

Brethren let not a mind or hand be engaged in criticizing the Bible. It is a work that Satan delights to have any of you do, but it is not a work the Lord has pointed out for you to do.

Men should let God take care of His own Book, His living Oracles, as He has done for ages. They begin to question some parts of revelation and pick flaws in the apparent inconsistencies of this statement and that statement. Beginning at Genesis, they give up that which they deem questionable, and their minds lead on, for Satan will lead to any length they may follow in their criticism and they see something to doubt in the whole Scriptures. Their faculties of criticism become sharpened by exercise, and they can rest on nothing with a certainty.

You try to reason with these men, but your time is lost. They will exercise their power of ridicule even upon the Bible. They even become mockers, and they would be astonished if you put it to them in that light. (*Ibid.*, par. 12–13)

Brethren, cling to your Bible as it reads, and stop your criticism in regard to its validity, and obey the Word, and not one of you will be lost. The ingenuity of men has been exercised for ages to measure the Word of God by their finite minds and limited comprehension.

If the Lord, the author of the living Oracles, would throw back the curtain and reveal His wisdom and His glory before them, they would shrink into nothingness and exclaim as did Isaiah, “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”

Isaiah 6:5. (*Ibid.*, par. 14)

Simplicity and plain utterance are comprehended by the illiterate, by the peasant, and the child as well as by the full grown man or the giant in intellect. If the individual is possessed of large talents of mental powers, he will find in the Oracles of God treasures of truth, beautiful and valuable, which he can appropriate. He will also find difficulties, and secrets and wonders which will give him the highest satisfaction to study during a long lifetime, and yet there is an infinity beyond. (*Ibid.*, par. 15)

Men of humble acquirements, possessing but limited capabilities and opportunities to become conversant in the Scriptures, find in the living Oracles comfort, guidance, counsel, and the plan of salvation as clear as a sunbeam. No one need be lost for want of knowledge, unless he is willfully blind.

We thank God that the Bible is prepared for the poor man as well as for the learned man. It is fitted for all ages and all classes. (*Ibid.*, par. 16–17)

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

INSPIRATION



“The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God’ (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language. (*ISM* 25.1)

“The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that ‘the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us’ (John 1:14). (ISM 25.2)

“Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony. (*ISM 25.3*)

“As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind—a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life. (*ISM* 25.4)

“God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do His work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth.” (*1SM* 26.1)

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. (*1SM 21.1*)

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words and thoughts receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.—Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). (*ISM* 21.2)

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

RE-CREATION



- ❖ John 3:3–8—The argument that because the new birth is not apparent to the natural eyesight it is therefore a figment of the imagination, is no more valid than it would be if used of the wind. In each case judgment is to be based on the effects produced. (*SDA BC*)
- ❖ John 6:63—Christ's words are spirit and life.

- ❖ Isaiah 11:2—Wisdom, knowledge, etc.
- ❖ John 16:13—Guide
- ❖ 1 John 2:27—Teacheth all things
- ❖ Isaiah 59:19—Defeats the enemy
- ❖ Romans 8:16—Witness
- ❖ John 14:26—Brings to remembrance

Christ said to Nicodemus, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” John 3:8. Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God. While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest. (*SC 57.2*)

If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts. (SC 57.2)

- ❖ 1 Peter 1:23–25—The word which proceeds from God; the word of the kingdom (Matt 13:19). The Scriptures constitute God’s word for man. By adhering to its principles any man will experience a “new birth” of hope, strength, and character. Apart from the “word of God” man can expect no moral transformation, no spiritual regeneration. (Ibid., few edits)
- ❖ James 1:18–22—Be doers of the word of truth; firstfruits are a pledge of the harvest to follow (1 Cor 15:20, 23; Rom 8:23, 16:5; Rev 14:4)

Man lost his life by the first act of
disobedience (Gen. 2:17).

GOD IS LOVE

- ❖ 1 John 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 19—God is love
- ❖ 1 John 3:16—God is love
- ❖ John 3:16; Jeremiah 31:3—everlasting love; Psalm 78:38—full of compassion; Matthew 14:14—moved with compassion;

Satan trembled as he viewed his work. He was alone in meditation upon the past, the present, and his future plans. His mighty frame shook as with a tempest. An angel from Heaven was passing. He called him, and entreated an interview with Christ. This was granted him. He then related to the Son of God that he repented of his rebellion, and wished again the favor of God. He was willing to take the place God had previously assigned him, and be under his wise command. (*ISP* 29.2)

Christ wept at Satan's woe, but told him, as the mind of God, that he could never be received into Heaven. Heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. **All Heaven would be marred** should he be received back; for sin and rebellion originated with him. The seeds of rebellion were still within him. He had, in his rebellion, no occasion for his course, and he had not only hopelessly ruined himself, but the host of angels also, who would then have been happy in Heaven had he remained steadfast. The law of God could condemn, but could not pardon. (*ISP* 29.2)

His followers were seeking him; and he aroused himself and, assuming a look of defiance, informed them of his plans to wrest from God the noble Adam and his companion Eve. If he could, in any way, beguile them to disobedience, God would make some provision whereby they might be pardoned, and then himself and all the fallen angels **would be in a fair way to share** with them of God's mercy. (*ISP* 30.4)

If this should fail, they could unite with Adam and Eve; for when once they should transgress the law of God, they would be subjects of God's wrath, like themselves. Their transgression would place them also, in a state of rebellion; and they could unite with Adam and Eve, **take possession of Eden**, and hold it as their home. And if they could **gain access to the tree of life** in the midst of the garden, their strength would, they thought, be equal to that of the holy angels, and even God himself could not expel them. (*ISP* 30.4)

Satan cast off his feelings of despair and weakness, and, as their leader, fortified himself to brave out the matter, and do all in his power to defy the authority of God and his Son. He acquainted them with his plans.

If he should come boldly upon Adam and Eve and **make complaints of God's own Son**, they would not listen to him for a moment, but would be prepared for such an attack. Should he seek to **intimidate them because of his power**, so recently an angel in high authority, he could accomplish nothing. He decided that **cunning and deceit** would do what might, or force, could not. (*ISP* 32.2)

God assembled the angelic host to take measures to avert the threatened evil. It was decided in Heaven's council for angels to visit Eden and warn Adam that he was in danger from the foe. Two angels sped on their way to visit our first parents. The holy pair received them with joyful innocence, expressing their grateful thanks to their Creator for thus surrounding them with such a profusion of his bounty. (*ISP* 32.3)

- ❖ Complaints—God's law oppressive, not needed by heavenly hosts and results in bondage; God is revengeful, cruel, and a tyrant; I will give you freedom and liberty
- ❖ Intimidation—roaring lion; excommunication; the power of church and state combined; loss of income, prestige, or power
- ❖ Cunning & Deceit—God's law is no longer binding or is changed; deny doctrines that are pillars (1 Tim 3:15); errors such as eternal torment, there is no heavenly sanctuary or investigative judgment, or perfection is impossible on this earth (Matt 5:8); neglect study and prayer or look to men for answers (ministers, priests); it is of no consequence what we believe, there are many ways to heaven; spiritualism in all its manifestations; feelings over the facts of God's word

Everything lovely and attractive was theirs to enjoy, and everything seemed wisely adapted to their wants; and that which they prized above all other blessings, was the society of the Son of God and the heavenly angels, for they had much to relate to them at every visit, of their new discoveries of the beauties of nature in their lovely Eden home, and they had many questions to ask relative to many things which they could but indistinctly comprehend. (*ISP* 32.3)

The angels graciously and lovingly gave them the information they desired. They also gave them the sad history of Satan's rebellion and fall. **They then distinctly informed them** that the tree of knowledge was placed in the garden to be a pledge of their obedience and love to God; that the high and happy estate of the holy angels was to be retained upon condition of obedience; that they were similarly situated; that they could obey the law of God and be inexpressibly happy, or disobey, and lose their high estate, and be plunged into hopeless despair. (*ISP* 33.1)

They told Adam and Eve that God would not compel them to obey—that he had not removed from them power to go contrary to his will; that they were moral agents, free to obey or disobey. There was but one prohibition that God had seen fit to lay upon them as yet. If they should transgress the will of God, they would surely die. They told Adam and Eve that the most exalted angel, next in order to Christ, refused obedience to the law of God which he had ordained to govern heavenly beings; that this rebellion had caused war in Heaven which resulted in the rebellious being expelled therefrom, and every angel was driven out of Heaven who united with him in questioning the authority of the great Jehovah; and that this fallen foe was now an enemy to all that concerned the interest of God and his dear Son. (*ISP* 33.2)

Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foot-hold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of himself, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” [John 14:30.] Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept his Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in him that Satan could use to his advantage. **This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble. (GC88 622.4)**