

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

THE POSITION
OF "THE BIBLE,
AND THE BIBLE
ONLY" AND THE
RELATIONSHIP OF
THIS TO THE
WRITINGS OF
ELLEN WHITE

ARTHUR L. WHITE

**The Position of “The
Bible, and the Bible
Only” and the
Relationship of This to
the Writings of Ellen
White**

Ellen G. White

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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

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The Ellen G. White Estate

The purpose of this paper is to give an opportunity to the pioneers of the SDA church to disclose their understanding of the relationship of the Protestant position of “The Bible and the Bible Alone” to their wholehearted acceptance of the product of Ellen G. White’s pen as inspired writings. James and Ellen White are the principal spokesmen on this point, possibly because their statements were published and are therefore more readily available, possibly because they more than others were on the spot, as it were, on the question. Then regardless of other points, Ellen White’s declarations naturally carry great weight.

Statements and allusions of their contemporaries fall in line with the statements of the Whites. Some today seem perplexed with what seems to be a conflict in the repeated statements employing the term, “The Bible and the Bible alone” and at the same time giving full credence to the claim of inspiration for the writings of Ellen White, which binds us to acceptance and obedience.

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The Bible and the Bible Alone

“The Bible and the Bible alone, is our rule of faith” are familiar words quoted from Ellen G. White as appearing in [Counsels on Sabbath School Work, 84](#).

Ellen White’s last book, *Prophets and Kings*, admonishes: “The words of the Bible, and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit.” p. 626.

“The Bible is a perfect, and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice” wrote James White in [A Word to the Little Flock, 13](#).

[2] In contrast, and possibly in seeming conflict, is the statement from James White: “We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time to time.” [The Review and Herald, October 8, 1861](#). From Ellen White we have the assertion that “The Lord has revealed many things pointing out the truth, thus saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.”—[Letter 127, 1910, \(The Messenger, 82\)](#).

The Context of Determining Our Position

Our forefathers had been in the great Advent awakening. (1) It was characterized by the clear evidence of the work of the Spirit of God.

(2) It was noted for its absence from fanaticism and excesses. (3) Many had experienced disfellowship from churches with rigid ideas when as far as they could see their only guilt was that they had accepted and were walking in the light of God's holy Word. The creed of these churches made no allowance for growth in an understanding of Bible truth.

(4) Soon after the disappointment of 1844 they discovered that in the matter of the Sunday day of rest there was only tradition for its support. The Bible clearly designated the seventh day. They saw almost all Christians observing Sunday and faced great opposition to the clear Bible truth of the sacredness of the true Bible sabbath.

This was enough to lead them to take the position of the Bible and the Bible only as their rule—not tradition. But there were other factors.

There was a contemporary religious group who assumed the name of “latter day saints,” who took the position that the Bible should be accepted “as far as it was translated correctly.” They placed great confidence in the *Book of Mormon* which was taken to supersede the Bible.

What's more, their self-appointed “prophet”, Joseph Smith, had made a translation of the Bible, not working from the manuscript sources, but from what he claimed were revelations from God.

Then in the spring of 1844—note the date—Joseph Smith had [3] been murdered while waiting trial for his acts which stemmed partly from financial mismanagement, but more from his teaching that a man might have more than one wife—all on the basis of what he claimed God had shown him in vision.

This was not a propitious time for anyone to claim to have visions from God.

The Factors of Creeds and Traditions

James White, belonging to the Christian Connection, was dedicated to God's word without creedal explanation of positions. His contribution to the early Millerite journal the *Day Star* reveals his distaste for creeds. On January 24, 1846, he writes

of "a certain class who deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. This class can be no other than those who spiritualize away the existence of the Father and the Son, as two distinct, literal, tangible persons, also a literal Holy city and throne of David... The way spiritualizers this way have disposed of or denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ is first using the old *unscriptural trinitarian creed*."

He would stand by the Bible. There was no place for tradition or creeds in his doctrinal holdings. And Ellen White, too, was personally concerned with certain teachings of the Methodist creed taught to her in her teenage years: "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts." (*Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, 1896, pp. 19, 20)

This and conversation with James are likely what led her when in an early vision in seeking to know the truth she on no less than two occasions made inquiry. We find the references in *Early Writings*, one on [page 54](#), "I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had." Again in [Early Writings, 77](#), she reports: "I have [4] *often* seen the lovely Jesus, that He is a person. I asked Him if His Father was a person and had *a form like Himself*. Said Jesus; I am in the *express image of my Father's person*."

Then there was the Sabbath-Sunday discussion, with the latter totally dependent on tradition.

With traditions and creeds on one hand, with disturbing teachings of self-appointed prophets on the other hand, our forefathers when

confronted with the visions of Ellen White were forced to find and declare a position on the relationship of her teachings to God's Word—the Bible.

Could it be that God would inspire a prophet of His choice with messages which conflicted with those of other of His prophets? Would messages given in our day supercede the Bible?

A Firm Position

They were led to lay down the firm plank, as James White did in his 1847 pamphlet:

“The Bible is a perfect, and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice.” *Word to the Little Flock*, page 13.

But just what did he mean? Was this stand taken to the exclusion of light which might come in genuine present day visions? The answer is *No*.

He took the position that not only does the position of “the Bible alone” allow the acceptance of a genuine manifestation of the gift, but it also *enjoined* such acceptance. We will read his statement in its full setting.

“The Bible is a perfect, and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice. But this is no reason, why God may not show the past, present, and future fulfillment of his word, in these last days, by dreams and visions: according to Peter’s testimony. True visions are given to lead us to God, and his written word; but those that are given for a new rule of faith and practice, separate from the Bible, cannot be from God, and should be rejected.”—*Word to the Little Flock*, p. 13.

[5] He then proceeds in the same pamphlet to publish Ellen’s first vision and as he does so introduces 46 Bible references to paralleling points. He demonstrated that the vision was in harmony with the Bible.

A similar approach was made by Ellen White in 1851 in her first book. After presenting the account of her life, in six pages, and then

a number of visions in the next 56 pages she on the last page in closing the book declared:

“I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the “last days”: not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth. Thus God dealt with Peter when He was about to send him to preach to the Gentiles.”—*Experience and Views*, p. 64 ([Early Writings, 78](#))

In the Setting of the Visions

Though James and Ellen White from time to time reiterated this position “of the Bible and the Bible alone,” they often did so in the very setting of the argument for accepting the visions. *At no time did they see this position as excluding the visions in arriving at truth in a study of doctrine or an understanding of duty.*

In fact, they not infrequently referred to the visions given to Ellen White as instrumental in defining truth. Note this E.G. White statement in [Gospel Workers, 302](#):

“One error after another pressed in upon us; ministers and doctors brought in new doctrines. We would search the Scriptures with much prayer, and the Holy Spirit would bring the truth to our minds. Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures, and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. *The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error.*

“As the points of our faith were thus established, our feet were placed upon a solid foundation. *We accepted the truth point by point, under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. I would be taken off in vision, and explanations would be given me.*” [Gospel Workers, 302.](#)

¹

[6] In this connection we have a statement made by Ellen White in 1906 as she wrote of the work of a much admired evangelist Elder W. W. Simpson who was then holding evangelistic meetings in the Oakland, California area. At an appropriate point in his work, Simpson gave a discourse or two on the Spirit of Prophecy and then

¹Note: All italics in this document supplied

invited Ellen White to come to Oakland to speak to the people. In referring to Simpson's work and this experience she wrote:

“In his teaching Elder Simpson showed that the Spirit of Prophecy has an important part to act in the establishment of the truth.”

Influence of the Spirit of Prophecy in Establishing Doctrine

We could cite several concrete illustrations on this point. We present one, the happenings of the second of the five Sabbath conferences of 1848. It was the first of two conferences held that summer in New York State. She writes:

“Our first conference was at Volney in Bro. Arnold’s barn. There were about 35 present, all that could be collected in that part of the State. There were hardly two agreed. Each was strenuous for his views, declaring that they were according to the Bible. All were anxious for an opportunity to advance their sentiments...

“Brother Arnold held that the 1,000 years of Revelation were in the past; and that the 144,000 were those raised at Christ’s resurrection. And as we had the emblem of our dying Lord before us, and were about to commemorate His sufferings, Bro. Arnold arose and said he had no faith in what we were about to do; that the Sacrament was a continuation of the Passover, to be observed but once a year.

“These strange differences of opinion rolled a heavy weight upon me, especially as Bro. Arnold spoke of the 1,000 years being in the past. I knew that he was in error...

“The light of heaven rested upon me. I was soon lost to earthly things. My accompanying angel presented before me some of the errors of those present, and also the truth in contrast with their errors. That these discordant views, which they claimed to be according to the Bible, were only according to their opinion of the Bible, and that their errors must be yielded, and they unite upon the third angel’s message.

“Our meeting ended victoriously. Truth gained the victory.”—[Spiritual Gifts 2:97-99](#).

In this discussion we find a keystone in the often quoted statement written in 1903 and first published in 1904. It is today in [Selected Messages 1:206-7](#)

“Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power.

[7]

“When they came to the point in their study where they said, ‘We can do nothing more,’ *the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the Scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.*

“During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. *I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made—clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word*

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~~of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I~~
could not understand these matters, and they accepted
as light direct from heaven the revelations given."

A decade earlier in an article published in the [The Review and Herald, July 26, 1892](#), titled, "Search the Scriptures" Ellen White recounted the experiences of the early days in Bible study. We present here two significant references:

"On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and *difficult portions were made clear through God's appointed way*, and then there was perfect harmony."

"At times *the power of God came upon us* in a marked manner, and when *clear light revealed the points of truth*, we would weep and rejoice together." See Appendix A for the fuller context.

[8] It is clear that it never occurred to the pioneers who took the position of the Bible, and the Bible alone, that there was any inconsistency with the fact that as they endeavored in those early days to ferret out the doctrines from God's Word, that He should give light that helped them to "understand the Scriptures" or to make plain to Ellen White "a line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God."

A variation of the much used quote above, appearing as [Manuscript 135, 1903](#), is to the student investigating the fine points of this topic, of interest and worth close scrutiny. In the setting of the quotation above she writes:

"My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, a man who was keen, noble, and true, and many others whose names I cannot now recall, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for truth. At our important meetings, these men would meet together, and search for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly; for we felt that we must learn God's

truth. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light, and studying the word.

“As we fasted and prayed, great power came upon us. But I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend what we were studying. Then the Spirit of God would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, *with instruction as to the position we were to take regarding truth and duty.*

“A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was plainly marked out before me, and I gave my brethren and sisters the instruction that the Lord had given me. They knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given me. *The leading points of our faith as we hold them today were firmly established.* Point after point was clearly defined, and all the brethren came into harmony.

“The whole company of believers were united in the truth. There were those who came in with strange doctrines, but we were never afraid to meet them. *Our experience was wonderfully established by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.*

“For two or three years my mind continued to be locked to the Scriptures. In 1846 I was married to Elder James White. It was some time after my second son was born that we were *in great perplexity regarding certain points of doctrine.* I was asking the Lord to unlock my mind, that I might understand His word. Suddenly I seemed to be enshrouded in clear, beautiful light, and *ever since, the Scriptures have been an open book to me.*

“I was at that time [winter of 1850-1851] in Paris, Maine. Old Father Andrews was very sick. For some

time he had been a great sufferer from inflammatory rheumatism. He could not move without intense pain. We prayed for him. I laid my hands on his head, and said, 'Father Andrews, the Lord Jesus maketh thee whole.' He was healed instantly. He got up and walked about the room, praising God, and saying, 'I never saw it on this wise. Angels of God are in this room.' The glory of God was revealed. Light seemed to shine all through the house, and an angel's hand was laid upon my head. From that time to this, I have been enabled to understand the word of God."—Ms. 135, 1903.

Again and again through the years Ellen White makes reference to truth which was attested to by the miracle working power of the Spirit of God. Only indirectly are such expressions germane to this topic. Attention of the reader is called to *Appendix B*, "God Through the Holy Spirit Set His Seal Upon the Truth." See page 23.

If there should remain some vestige of question as to just how the pioneers in the beginning days assessed the matter, we may let James White answer, as he did in the [The Review and Herald, October 3, 1854](#).

"The position that *the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the rule of faith and duty, does not shut out the gifts which God set in the church*. To reject them is shutting out that part of the Bible which presents them. We say, Let us have a whole Bible, and let that, and that alone, be our rule of faith and duty. Place the gifts where they belong, and all is harmony."

Then in 1856 he repeated:

"I still say that the Bible is my rule of faith and practice, and in saying this, I do not reject the Holy Spirit in its diversities of operations." [The Review and Herald, February 14, 1856](#).

A Creed Would Vitiate the Spirit of Prophecy

It was not long after this that the question was referred to incidentally, in the setting of the adoption of a creed. At a conference at Battle Creek on the evening after the Sabbath, October 5, 1861, the brethren discussed the adoption of a statement as a basis for church membership. As he spoke at length, James White said:

“I take the ground that creeds stand in direct opposition to the gifts. Let us suppose a case: We get up a creed, stating just what we shall believe on this point or the other, and just what we shall do in reference to this thing and that, and that we will believe the gifts too.

[10]

“But suppose the Lord, through the gifts, should give us some new light that did not harmonize with our creed: then, if we remain true to the gifts, it knocks our creed all over at once. Making a creed is setting the stakes, and barring up the way to all future advancement.

“God put the gifts into the church for a good and great object; but men who have got up their churches, have shut up the way or have marked out a course for the Almighty... A creed and the gifts thus stand in direct opposition to each other.

“Now what is our position as a people? The Bible is our creed... *We take the Bible and the gifts of the spirit, embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time to time.*”—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1861](#). Reprinted in *Witness of the Pioneers*, p. 26.

Other Witnesses Testify

Early in 1863, Elder Uriah Smith presented an editorial in the *Review and Herald* in which he dealt with the question of the “Bible and the Bible Alone.” It opens:

“‘The Bible, and the Bible Alone,’ ‘The Bible in its purity,’ ‘The Bible a sufficient and only reliable rule of life,’ etc., etc., is now the great cry of those who are giving vent to their opposition to the visions, and are working with their might to prejudice others against them...

“The Protestant principle, of ‘the Bible and the Bible alone,’ is of itself good and true; and we stand upon it as firmly as anyone can; but when reiterated in connection with outspoken denunciations of the visions, it has specious appearance for evil. So used it contains a covert insinuation, most effectually calculated to warp the judgment of the unguarded, that to believe the visions is to leave the Bible, and to cling to the Bible, is to discard the visions...

“When we claim to stand on the Bible and Bible alone, we bind ourselves to receive, unequivocally and fully, all that the Bible teaches.” [The Review and Herald, January 13, 1863.](#) (In *Witness of the Pioneers*, p. 30).

Smith then in his three column statement develops this line of argument. The full statement with its unique and useful illustration is worth reading. It is attached as *Appendix D*. See page 27.

[11] A few years after this Elder J.N. Andrews, who edited the *Review* from 1869 to 1870, in the issue of February 15, 1870, presented an editorial under the title “Our Use of the Visions of Sr. White.” While he does not employ the term, “The Bible Alone” he writes of those who plead “that the Scriptures are sufficient” and makes clear our

position. The entire article will be found attached as *Appendix E*. We quote sufficient to reveal his line of thought.

“5. While therefore we do heartily accept the Scriptures as teaching man’s whole duty toward God, we do not deny the Holy Spirit that place in the church which the Scriptures assign to it...

“8. The work of the Holy Spirit may be divided into two parts: First, that which is designed simply to convert and to sanctify the persons affected by it. Second, that which is for the purpose of opening the truth of God, and of correcting error, and of reproof and rebuking secret sins. This part of the work is wrought by what the Scriptures term Spiritual Gifts. These exist, not for the especial good of the person to whose trust they are committed, but for the benefit of the whole body of the church.

“9. Now it is plain that those who reject the work of the Spirit of God under the plea that the Scriptures are sufficient, do deny and reject all that part of the Bible which reveals the office and work of the Holy Spirit.

“10. Thus [1 Corinthians 12](#), and [Ephesians 4](#), which define the gifts of the Spirit of God, cannot really form a part of the rule of life or those who affirm that the Scriptures are so sufficient in themselves that the gifts of the Spirit are unnecessary...

“14. The object of spiritual gifts is to maintain the living work of God in the church. They enable the Spirit of God to speak in the correction of wrongs, and in the exposure of iniquity... In short, their work is to unite the people of God in the same mind and in the same judgment upon the meaning of the Scriptures. Mere human judgment, with no direct instruction from Heaven, can never search out hidden iniquity, nor adjust dark and complicated church difficulties nor prevent different and conflicting interpretations of the Scriptures. It would be sad indeed if God could not still converse with

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xxii *His people.*"—^{*the Writings of Ellen White*}~~(In *Witness of the Pioneers*, p. 39)~~ (See
Appendix E, for the full article.)

[12] Elder George I. Butler, while president of the General Conference, wrote a series of five articles for the *Review* which were published from May 12 to June 9, 1874. He presents the subject from a broad base, and gives one paragraph to the point under discussion:

“It is again objected that the Bible alone is sufficient, because Paul tells us, ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’ If all Scripture is profitable, we suppose those portions are which teach the perpetuity of spiritual gifts, and that tell us they will be in the church in the last days, and tell us how to distinguish between the false and genuine. These prove the visions under consideration to be of the right stamp.”—[The Review and Herald, June 9, 1874](#). (In *Witness of the Pioneers*, p. 47).

An Examination of the Primary E.G. White Statements in Their Setting

With this background we may well come to a careful study of the primary E. G. White statements known to the writer in which the phrase “the Bible and the Bible alone” or some variation of this is used. We will present the statements in their chronological order. In each case the context should be observed.

1. (1851) *In the Setting: of the Presentation of the Visions:*

“I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, *in that Word, promised to give visions in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.* Thus God dealt with Peter when He was about to send him to preach to the Gentiles.”—[Early Writings, 78.](#)

2. (1885) *In the Setting of Man’s Views and Ideas:*

“When God’s Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; new truths, received and acted upon, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus.

“*The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony.*” [13]

“*Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts.* Man is fallible, but God’s Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, ‘It is written.’ Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.” [The Review and Herald, December 15, 1885 \(Selected Messages 1:416.\)](#)

3. (1888) *In the Setting of Tradition:*

“The Roman Church has not relinquished her claim to supremacy; and when the world and the Protestant churches accept *a sabbath of her creating*, while they reject the Bible Sabbath, they virtually admit this assumption.

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“They may claim the *authority of tradition* and of the Fathers for the change; but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome—that ‘*the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.*’”—[The Great Controversy, 448.](#)

4. (1888) *In the Setting; of Contrasting: Creeds or Opinions of Learned Men:*

“The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desire of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love.

[14] “But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain *the Bible and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain Thus saith the Lord in its support.*”—[The Great Controversy, 595.](#)

5. (1888) *In the Setting of Sabbath-breaking Theology*

“The test of a genuine Christian is given in the word of God. Says Jesus, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments’... Here are the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life. Your obedience to God’s commandments will prove your right to an inheritance with the saints in light...

“Search the Scriptures, and you will see that not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God’s law. *The world makes void the law of God;* but Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth...

“*The Bible is the only rule of faith and doctrine. And there is nothing more calculated to energize the mind, and strengthen the intellect, than the study of the word of God... Thousands of men who minister in the pulpit are lacking in essential qualities of mind and character, because they do not apply themselves to a study of the Scriptures.*”—[The Review and Herald, July 17, 1888, \(Fundamentals of Christian Education, 126\)](#) (Note: This clearly refers to the churches generally for our total laboring force in 1888 was 232.)

6. (1889) *In the Setting of the Saying and Doings of Men:*

“Our Sabbath-schools are nothing less than Bible societies, and in the sacred work of teaching the truths of God’s word they can accomplish far more than they have hitherto accomplished...”

“Do not make the Sabbath-school lessons dry and spiritless. Leave *the impression upon the mind that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is our rule of faith, and that the sayings and doings of men are not to be a criterion for our doctrines or actions.*”—*Sabbath School Worker*, January 1889, pp. 1, 2. (In [Counsels on Sabbath School Work](#), 84)

[15]

7. (1891) *In the Setting of Human Wisdom:*

“The Word of God must be studied as never before; for it is the precious offering that we must present to men, in order that they may learn the way of peace, and obtain that life which measures with the life of God.

“*Human wisdom so highly exalted among men sinks into insignificance before that wisdom which points out the way cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. The Bible alone affords the means of distinguishing the path of life from the broad road that leads to perdition and death.*”—[The Review and Herald, December 15, 1891](#). ([Fundamentals of Christian Education](#), 200).

8. (1894) *In Setting of the Experience of Anna Phillips:*

“I know that we are living very near the close of this earth’s history; startling events are preparing for development.

“*I am fully in harmony with you [A.T. Jones] in your work when you present the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the foundation of our faith.*

“Satan is an artful foe, and he will work where he is by many least expected. I have a message for you. Did you suppose that God had commissioned you to take the burden of presenting the visions of Anna Phillips, reading them in public, and uniting them with the testimonies the Lord has been pleased to give me? No, the Lord has not laid upon you this burden. He has not given you this work to do.”—[Letter 103, 1894](#). ([Selected Messages 2:85](#))

9. (1903) *In the Setting of Separation from the Churches:*

“We must study to find out the best way in which to take up the review of our experiences from the beginning of our work, when we separated *from the churches, and went forward step by step in the light that God gave us.*

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“We then took the position that the Bible, and the Bible only, was to be our guide; and we are never to depart from this position. We were given wonderful manifestations of the power of God. Miracles were wrought. Again and again, when we were brought into strait places, the power of God was displayed in our behalf.”—[Letter 105, 1903](#) (In [Counsels to Writers and Editors, 145.](#))

10. (1903) *In the Setting: of an Understanding of Coming Events:*

“Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, that they may not blow until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth; and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, *there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.*”

“The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before.”—[Education, 179-80.](#) (Note: How about *Great Controversy* with its forecasts. She saw it as complementary to the Bible.)

11. (Cir. 1914) *In the Setting of the Inquiry of All People as to the Significance of World Developments:*

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon *events taking place about us.* They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

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“*The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things.* Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before.”—[Prophets and Kings, 537.](#)

12. (Cir. 1914) *In the Setting of a Religion of Words Forms Traditions Maxims*

“The widespread iniquity prevalent today may in a great degree be attributed to a failure to study and obey the Scriptures, for when the word of God is set aside, its power to restrain the evil passions of the natural heart is rejected... *With the setting aside of the Bible has come a turning away from God's law. The doctrine that men are*

released from obedience to the divine precepts, has weakened the force of moral obligation and opened the floodgates of iniquity upon the world...

“Man has set his will against the will of God, but he cannot silence the word of command. The human mind cannot evade its obligation to a higher power. *Theories and speculations may abound; men may try to set science in opposition to revelation, and thus do away with God’s law;* but stronger and still stronger comes the command; “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve...”

“Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. Upon this battle we are now entering—a battle not between rival churches contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition... God’s holy word, which has been handed down to us at so great a cost of suffering and bloodshed, is little valued. There are few who really accept it as a rule of life...

“The tremendous issues of eternity demand of us something be- [18]
sides an imaginary religion, a religion of words and forms, where truth is kept in the outer court. God calls for a revival and a reformation. *The words of the Bible, and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit...*

“Let the word of God speak to the heart. Let those who have heard only of tradition and human theories and maxims, hear the voice of Him who can renew the soul unto eternal life.”—[Prophets and Kings, 624-6](#).

13. “The Bible Only” Position Did not Rule Out Ellen White in Shedding Light on Early World History

It may be of interest to put two statements together which have to do with early history of the world. In [Testimonies for the Church 5:25](#), is found a statement written in 1882:

“The Bible is the most comprehensive and the most instructive history which men possess... Its bright rays shine into the far distant past, where human research seeks vainly to penetrate.

"In God's word alone we find an authentic account of creation... Here only can we find a history of our race, unsullied by human prejudice or human pride."

Yet earlier she had in 1864 published *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 3, presenting in considerable detail the story of creation and early world history. In this she presents many details not found in the Bible. She claimed that God had through her shed light on the history of holy men of old. Here are her words as found in the introduction of the 1864 book:

"In presenting this, my third little volume, to the public, I am comforted with the conviction that *the Lord has made me his humble instrument in shedding some rays of precious light upon the past*. Sacred History relating to holy men of old is brief...

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"Since the great facts of faith, connected with the history of holy men of old, have been opened to me in vision; also, the important fact that God has nowhere lightly regarded the sin of the apostate, I have been more than ever convinced that ignorance as to these facts, and the wily advantage taken of this ignorance by some who know better, are the grand bulwarks of infidelity. If what I have written upon these points shall help any mind, let God be praised." [Spiritual Gifts 3:5, 6](#).

In *Appendix C* we present a few statements, less significant, but of interest.

Conclusion

We have examined the primary statements of James and Ellen White in which the words are used: “The Bible and the Bible alone.” We have quoted from other of the pioneers. In summary we may observe:

1. That at no time was this phrase employed to exclude the binding obligation to respond to the visions as light which God has given to His people.
2. That in most instances the words are employed in the setting of contrasting the teachings of God’s Word with tradition or man’s theories or a false Sabbath, etc.
3. In several cases the words are used in defining our position on the visions with the explanation that to follow the Bible enjoins the acceptance of the Spirit of Prophecy as binding upon all who accept God’s Word which forecasts the appearance of this gift in the last days.
4. That through the visions God has led us to a correct understanding of His word and has taught us and will continue to do so. Further we must ever recognize our obligation to accept this leading of God.

Time relationships are not observed in the statements. The positions set forth near the close of Ellen White’s life are in no way different than those presented in the initial statements of the 1840’s and 1850’s. [20]

Ellen White arose early on the morning of November 22, 1910, and made her way to her writing room at Elmshaven. She lit the lamp, kindled a fire on the open hearth and then had a season of prayer. She sat down to write, and in her writings that morning penned the words:

“The Lord has given me much light that I want the people to have; for there is instruction that the Lord has given me for His

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people. It is light that they should have, line upon line, and precept
upon precept, here a little and there a little. This is now to come
before the people, because *it has been given to correct specious
errors and to specify what is truth. The Lord has revealed many
things pointing out the truth, thus saying, This is the way, walk ye in
it.*"—[Letter 127, 1910](#) Published in *Messenger to the Remnant*, p.
82.

APPENDIX A—How the Pioneers Studied the Bible Together [21]

by Ellen G. White

Those who sincerely desire truth will not be reluctant to lay open their positions for investigation and criticism, and will not be annoyed if their opinions and ideas are crossed. This was the spirit cherished among us forty years ago.

We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. Solemnity characterized these councils of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth.

After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood, it was discussed, and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to see eye to eye, that we might be one, as Christ and the Father are one. Many tears were shed...

We spent many hours in this way. We did not generally study together more than four hours at a time, yet sometimes the entire night was spent in solemn investigation of the Scriptures, that we might understand the truth for our time. *On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and difficult portions were made clear through God's appointed way, and then there was perfect harmony.* We were all of one mind and one Spirit.

We sought most earnestly that the Scriptures should not be wrested to suit any man's opinions. We tried to make our differences as slight as possible by not dwelling on points that were of minor importance, upon which there were varying opinions. [See also [Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 25](#)] But the burden of every soul was to bring about a condition among the brethren which [22]

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would answer the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one as
he and the Father are one.

Sometimes one or two of the brethren would stubbornly set themselves against the view presented, and would act out the natural feelings of the heart; but when this disposition appeared, we suspended our investigations and adjourned our meeting, that each one might have an opportunity to go to God in prayer, and without conversation with others, study the point of difference, asking light from heaven.

With expressions of friendliness we parted, to meet again as soon as possible for further investigation. *At times the power of God came upon us in a marked manner, and when clear light revealed the points of truth, we would weep and rejoice together. We loved Jesus; we loved one another...*

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed...

When any of our brethren receive new light upon the Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candor to see if the points presented on a new subject can be substantiated by the inspired word...

The rebuke of the Lord will be upon those who would be guardians of the doctrine, who would bar the way that greater light shall not come to the people. A great work is to be done, and God sees that our leading men have need of greater light, that they may unite with the messengers who He shall send harmoniously to accomplish the work that He designs they should.—[The Review and Herald, July 26, 1892](#). (First part appears in [Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 24-26](#) [Italics Supplied])

APPENDIX B—God Through the Holy Spirit Set His Seal Upon the Truth

[23]

by Ellen G. White

The great waymarks of truth, showing us our bearings in prophetic history, are to be carefully guarded, lest they be torn down, and replaced with theories that would bring confusion rather than genuine light. I have been cited to the very erroneous theories that have been presented over and over again. Those who advocated these theories presented Scripture quotations, but they misapplied and misinterpreted them. The theories supposed to be correct were incorrect, and yet many thought them the very theories to be brought before the people...

There have been one and another who in studying their Bibles thought they discovered great light, and new theories, but these have not been correct. The Scripture is all true, but by misapplying the Scripture men arrive at wrong conclusions. We are engaged in a mighty conflict, and it will become more close and determined, as we near the final struggle. We have a sleepless adversary, and he is constantly at work upon human minds that have not had a personal experience in the teachings of the people of God for the past fifty years...

The burden of the warning now to come to the people of God, nigh and afar off, is the third angel's message. And those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today. The truths that have been unfolding in their order, as we have advanced along the line of prophecy revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today.

Those who passed over the ground step by step in the past history of our experience, seeing the chain of truth in the prophecies, were prepared to accept and obey every ray of light. They were

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~~praying, fasting, searching, digging for the truth as for hidden treasures, and the Holy Spirit, we know, was teaching and guiding us. Many theories were advanced, bearing a semblance of truth, but so mingled with misinterpreted and misapplied scriptures, that they led to dangerous errors. Very well do we know how every point of truth was established, and the seal set upon it by the Holy Spirit of God. And all the time voices were heard, "Here is the truth," "I have the truth; follow me." But the warnings came, "Go not ye after them. I have not sent them, but they ran."~~ (See [Jeremiah 23:21](#))—[Selected Messages 2:101-104](#). (1896)

APPENDIX C—Less Significant Statements on “The Bible and the Bible Only” or “The Bible Rule”

[25]

1. (1883) *In the Setting of Obedience to Bible and Testimonies:*

“They (men questioning the testimonies) have a painful consciousness that their life will not abide the test of the Spirit of God, *whether speaking through His Word or through the testimonies of His Spirit that would bring them to His Word.* Instead of beginning with their own hearts, and coming into harmony with the pure principles of the gospel, they find fault, and condemn the very means that God has chosen to fit up a people to stand in the day of the Lord.

Let some skeptical one come along, who is *not willing to square his life by the Bible rule*, who is seeking to gain the favor of all, and how soon the class that are not in harmony with the work of God are called out.”—E.G. White [Manuscript 1, 1883](#). (In [Selected Messages 1:45](#))

2. (1888) *In the Setting of the Bible Supreme and the Experience of Those Who Hold Views That Supersede It:*

“Luther... suffered great perplexity and distress from the course of fanatical persons who claimed that God had spoken directly through them, *and who therefore set in their own ideas and opinions above the testimony of the Scriptures.* Many who were lacking in faith and experience, but who had considerable self-sufficiency, and who loved to hear and tell some new thing, were beguiled by the pretensions of the new teachers, and they joined the agents of Satan in their work of tearing down what God had moved Luther to build up.

And the Wesleys, and others who blessed the world by their influence and their faith, encountered at every step the wiles of Satan in pushing over jealous, unbalanced, and unsanctified ones into fanaticism of every grade.

William Miller had no sympathy with those influences that led to fanaticism. He declared, with Luther, *that every spirit should be tested by the word of God...* [Said Miller] ‘We are commanded

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~~to try the spirits. The spirit that does not cause us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, is not the Spirit of Christ. I am more and more convinced that Satan has much to do in these wild movements... Many among us who pretend to be wholly sanctified, are following the traditions of men...~~

‘If a man judges himself by the word of God, and finds a perfect harmony through the whole word, then he must believe he has the truth; but *if he finds the spirit by which he is led does not harmonize with the whole tenor of God’s law or Book*, then let him walk carefully, lest he be caught in the snare of the devil.’—[The Great Controversy, 396, 397.](#)

3. (1899) *In the Setting of a Sports Program at the Avondale School:*

“It took time and a vast amount of labor and sorrow to wipe out the influence of the proceedings at the Avondale school on that last Wednesday afternoon. But the experience was a lesson that helped those in charge of the school to realize the tendency of such amusements... The effort to regain that which was lost by the proceedings of that afternoon cost the teachers much labor. They were severely tried. With the students there was seen a desire for further pleasure, and less regard for the instruction of God’s word...”

Let those who are educating the youth govern themselves according to the high and holy principles that Christ has given in His Word...

Teachers need an intimate acquaintance with the word of God. The Bible, and the Bible alone, should be their counselor.”—[Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 351-3](#)

**Note: There are many like statements, but to multiply their duplication would add little to the discussion.—A. L. White.*

APPENDIX D—Do We Discard the Bible by Endorsing the Visions

[27]

Editorial by Uriah Smith

“The Bible, and the Bible alone,” “The Bible in its purity,” “The Bible a sufficient and only reliable rule of life,” etc., etc., is now the great cry of those who are giving vent to their opposition to the visions, and are working with their might to prejudice others against them. This course reminds us of the low tricks and maneuvers resorted to by political demagogues to gain their nefarious ends. It is similar to the game played by the Democratic Party in the last election, which led to results in many States so disastrous to the Republicans, and to the country. Their cry was, “Our country before party;” and thus under the garb of supreme devotion to the country, to the exclusion of all other considerations, many honest-hearted ones were deceived into cooperation with them, and they were enabled to place in positions of trust and power, men full of depravity and corruption. Such are unworthy weapons in the hands of Christians; yet some, we are sorry to say, who profess that name, do not hesitate to use them.

The Protestant principle, of “The Bible and the Bible alone,” is of itself good and true; and we stand upon it as firmly as anyone can; but when reiterated in connection with outspoken denunciations of the visions, it has a specious appearance for evil. So used it contains a covert insinuation, most effectually calculated to warp the judgment of the unguarded, that to believe the visions is to leave the Bible, and to cling to the Bible, is to discard the visions. For the sake of those who may be liable to be misled by such a course, let us give it a moment’s candid examination.

1. When we claim to stand on the Bible and the Bible alone, we bind ourselves to receive, unequivocally and fully, all that the Bible teaches. This being a self-evident proposition, we pass on to inquire what the Bible teaches concerning the outpouring of the Spirit, its

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It is the prerogative of this dispensation over all others, to rejoice in the outpouring of the Spirit. It is called emphatically a dispensation in which we have the "ministration of the Spirit." The prophecy which gleamed like a star of hope before the ancient prophets, was this: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." This prophecy applies to this dispensation, and its fulfillment commenced, but only commenced, on the day of Pentecost. And what follows the outpouring of the Spirit? "Your sons and your daughters shall prophecy." The very next announcement after the fact that the Spirit was to be given, is that the gift of prophecy will be exercised. Now just so sure as one part of the prophecy is fulfilled, and God grants his Spirit to his people, just so sure the other part will be fulfilled, and prophesying, dreams, and visions, will be manifested in their midst; for they are connected together, one and inseparable.

Further, we find Christ giving to his disciples as the best legacy he could leave his church, the promise of the Spirit of Truth, or Comforter, to be with them and lead them into all truth. He gave them this as the promise best calculated to comfort their sorrowful hearts in view of his separation from them. The next most desirable object to his personal presence, would be the presence and operation of his Spirit.

[29] Again, we find emblazoned as it were in golden characters on the very face and front of much of the New Testament record, the fact that God has placed, set, and established in his church, the gifts of his spirit. It is declared to be the one Spirit of God, with a diversity of operations. And these results will follow the presence of the Spirit of God, as surely as effect follows cause. As the engine moves on the application of steam, or the water-wheel revolves under the impulse of the waterfall, so the gifts of the church, prominent among which are visions, will inevitably follow the operation of the Spirit of God with power.

So that if we believe in the Spirit at all, we must believe in these, the appointed channels through which God has told us that it shall manifest itself.

2. What is the object of these gifts? Christ explicitly informs us that they are given to comfort his people, and lead them into truth;

and the apostle responds, For the perfecting of the saints, to aid in the work of the ministry, to edify the body of Christ, to bring us into the unity of the faith. Most glorious and desirable objects; and criminally indifferent to his own spiritual interests must that person be, who is not reaching forward to them with all his heart, or who would oppose any of the means by which God would help us to attain them.

3. How long were these gifts to continue? (1) The prophet declared that they should be given for the last days; but if they are withdrawn for any time before the very last day, this statement cannot be true; for they must cover all the intervening ground, from the time they are placed in the church till the last day comes—till the close of this dispensation. (2) The necessity which led God to place them in the church at first, is a necessity which has existed all along till the present time, and will exist till the close of the present state of the Church's pupilage; and no one, we have charity to believe, will be disposed to accuse the divine wisdom of withdrawing the means given to supply a certain necessity, while that necessity exists. We accordingly find Paul declaring explicitly that these things shall continue till the perfect state is come. [1 Corinthians 13](#).

So far then all is established and plain. We have seen that there would be manifestations of the Spirit, including visions, in the church, and that they should continue till the end. But perhaps the objector may make one more stand behind such a position as this: "I admit that there were to be visions among God's people before the end, but I cannot endorse the ones already manifested." If the one who thus objects is with us, in all the conclusions we have reached thus far in this article, as he must be if he stands upon his acknowledged position of the Bible and the Bible alone, this point will not detain us long. We need not remind him that in all questions between opinions and institutions, "there is a presumption in favor of the old opinion and established usage; and he who attacks the question, assumes the burden of proof; and unless he can bring proof to the contrary, the old opinion and institution must stand." *Tappan*, p. 427. Apply this principle to the question in hand: From the very commencement of the third angel's message, there have been visions among us. They have been received by the body as genuine manifestations of the Spirit of God. They have comforted

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~~the desponding and corrected the erring. They have confirmed the~~
doubting, and strengthened the weak. And the truest friends of the cause have cherished and loved them most. It must be a radical revolution, therefore, that would lead us to abandon these for the uncertainties of the future. But as such manifestations were to be in the church, the whole weight of evidence goes in favor of these, unless it can be shown that they are positively and radically defective. How then shall we satisfy ourselves on this point? The Bible gives us an infallible test for all these things. By "the law and the testimony," and "by their own fruits," we are to judge them. Whatever contradicts in no slightest particular the law and the testimony, and, in addition

[31] to this tends to elevate, enoble, and purify, we maybe sure comes from above, and not from beneath. But these manifestations do in the strictest manner accord with the teachings of the word of God, and lead us to study and prize it; while we might safely challenge the world to show a single instance where their influence has tended to depravity and corruption, or where it has not on the other hand tended to lead all who would receive them, to holiness and purity of heart. On the supposition, now, that these are not the work of the Spirit of God, as they must then be the work of the Devil, we inquire, Has the Devil thus fallen in love with truth and righteousness? Has he made a league with the word of God, to sustain and uphold it? Has he so far lost sight of the interests of his own kingdom as to lend his efforts to root out all false doctrines from our belief, and all seeds of unrighteousness from our hearts, that we may have truth without error, and live a life without sin?

In view of all these considerations, what shall we conclude? Those who reject these manifestations, do so not only without evidence, but against all evidence. Those who profess to stand on the Bible and the Bible alone, are bound to receive what the Bible tells them will exist, and commends them to respect.

One illustration may help to set this matter in a still clearer light. Suppose we are about to start upon a voyage. The owner of the vessel gives us a book of directions, telling us that it contains instructions sufficient for our whole journey, and that if we will heed them, we shall reach in safety our port of destination. Setting sail we open our book to learn its contents. We find that its author lays down general principles to govern us in our voyage, and instructs us as

far as practicable, touching the various contingencies that may arise, till the end; but he also tells us that the latter part of our journey will be especially perilous; that the features of the coast are ever changing by reason of quicksand and tempests; “but for this part of the journey,” says he, “I have provided you a pilot, who will meet you, and give you such directions as the surrounding circumstances and dangers may require; and to him you must give heed.” With these directions we reach the perilous time specified, and the pilot, according to promise, appears. But some of the crew, as he offers his services, rise up against him. “We have the original book of directions,” say they, “and that is enough for us. We stand upon that, and that alone; we want nothing of you.” Who now heed that original book of directions? those who reject the pilot, or those who receive him, as that book instructs them? Judge ye. [32]

But some, through lack of perception, or lack of principle, or the ebullitions of an unconquerable prejudice, one, or all combined, may meet us at this point like this: “Then you would have us take Sister White as our pilot, would you?” It is to forestall any efforts in this direction, that this sentence is penned. We say no such thing. What we do say is distinctly this; that the gifts of the Spirit are given for our pilot through these perilous times, and wherever and in whomsoever we find genuine manifestations of these, we are bound to respect them, nor can we do otherwise without in so far rejecting the word of God, which directs us to receive them. Who now stand upon the Bible, and the Bible alone?

Let no one then be frightened at this false alarm. A moment’s consideration will show who receive the Bible, and who do not. Whoever receives it fully, will receive the pilot according to its directions. We do not, then, discard, but obey, the Bible by endorsing the visions; while we should just so far reject and disobey it, as we should refuse to receive the provisions it has made for our comfort, edification, and perfection.—[The Review and Herald, January 13, 1863.](#)

[33] **APPENDIX E—Our Use of the Visions of Sr. White**

Editorial by J.N. Andrews

It is quite generally understood that the Seventh-day Adventists are believers in the perpetuity of spiritual gifts. It is also understood that we regard the visions of Sr. White as given by the Spirit of God. But the use which we make of the doctrine of spiritual gifts, and particularly of the visions of Sr. White, are very generally misunderstood.

1. We understand that the Holy Scriptures are divinely inspired, and that they contain the truth of God which is able to make us wise unto salvation.

2. But we do not understand that the gift of the Scriptures to mankind, supersedes the gift of the Holy Spirit to the people of God.

3. On the contrary, we do believe that the Scriptures plainly reveal the office and work of the Holy Spirit: which office and work can never cease while man remains upon probation.

4. This work of the Holy Spirit is revealed to us in the Bible doctrine of spiritual gifts.

5. While therefore we do heartily accept the Scriptures as teaching man's whole duty toward God, we do not deny the Holy Spirit that place in the church which the Scriptures assign to it.

6. The office of the Holy Spirit is to reprove men of sin ([John 16:8](#)); to take away the carnal mind, and to change our evil nature by removing guilt from the conscience; to make us new creatures ([Romans 8:1-9](#)); and to shed abroad in our hearts the love of God ([Romans 5:5](#)); and to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God ([Romans 8:16](#)); and to lead into all truth ([John 16:13](#)) and finally to change the saints to immortality at the last day. ([Romans 8:11](#); [2 Corinthians 5:4, 5](#))

[34] 7. The Scriptures contain the truth of God, as the precious metals are contained in a mine. The work of the Spirit of God in leading men into all truth is to search out, lay open, bring to light

and vindicate the truth of God. And in reproofing sin, it has not only the work of impressing the conscience of the sinner by powerful convictions of guilt, but also in showing to chosen servants of God the guilt of others; and revealing wrongs which otherwise would remain hidden to the great detriment of the church, and to the ruin of the sinner.

8. The work of the Holy Spirit may be divided into two parts: First, that which is designed simply to convert and to sanctify the person affected by it. Second, that which is for the purpose of opening the truth of God, and of correcting error, and of reproofing and rebuking secret sins. This part of the work is wrought by what the Scriptures term spiritual gifts. These exist, not for the especial good of the person to whose trust they are committed, but for the benefit of the whole body of the church.

9. Now it is plain that those who reject the work of the Spirit of God under the plea that the Scriptures are sufficient, do deny and reject all that part of the Bible which reveals the office and work of the Holy Spirit.

10. Thus [1 Corinthians 12](#), and [Ephesians 4](#), which define the gifts of the Spirit of God, cannot really form a part of the rule of life of those who affirm that the Scriptures are so sufficient in themselves that the gifts of the Spirit are unnecessary.

11. The Spirit of God gave the Scriptures. But it is plain that it did not give them for the purpose of shutting itself out from all participation in the work of God among men. And what the Bible says of the gifts of the Spirit shows just what relation the Spirit of God sustains to the work of the gospel.

12. Thus Paul states the matter in two of his epistles:

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[1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#): “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of Wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same

Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Ephesians 4:11-13: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

13. Now the Bible expressly teaches that the existence of these gifts is as necessary to the church of Christ, as the different members are necessary to the well-being of the body. While, therefore, the Bible recognizes the gifts of the Spirit, these are not given to supersede the Bible, nor yet to fill the same place as the Bible.

[36] 14. The object of spiritual gifts is to maintain the living work of God in the church. They enable the Spirit of God to speak in the correction of wrongs, and in the exposure of iniquity. They are the means whereby God teaches his people when they are in danger of taking wrong steps. They are the means by which the Spirit of God sheds light upon church difficulties, when otherwise their adjustment would be impossible. They also constitute the means whereby God preserves his people from confusion by pointing out errors, by correcting false interpretations of the Scriptures, and causing light to shine out upon that which is in danger of being wrongly understood, and therefore of being the cause of evil and division to the people of God. In short, their work is to unite the people of God in the same mind and in the same judgment upon the meaning of the Scriptures. Mere human judgment, with no direct instruction from Heaven, can never search out hidden iniquity, nor adjust dark and complicated church difficulties, nor prevent different and conflicting interpretations of the Scriptures. It would be sad indeed if God could not still converse with his people.

15. But here it is proper to say that these uses of the gifts of the Spirit pertain almost wholly to the household of faith. Men who

have no acquaintance with them cannot be affected by them. And also, when men have had little opportunity to be acquainted with the manifestations of the Spirit of God, they cannot be asked to accept such work as specially wrought by God. It is but just that they should have clear and convincing evidence for themselves that the Spirit of God is in the work.

16. For this purpose we hold that all the tests presented in the Bible should be applied to the gifts, and that they should be found to sustain the test of such examination.

17. We therefore do not test the world in any manner by these gifts. Nor do we in our intercourse with other religious bodies who are striving to walk in the fear of God, in any way make these a test of Christian character. Upon none of these persons do we urge these manifestations of the Spirit of God, nor test them by their teaching.

18. There is such a thing, however, as men having in the providence of God an opportunity to become acquainted with the special work of the Spirit of God, so that they shall acknowledge that their light is clear, convincing, and satisfactory. To such persons, we consider the gifts of the Spirit are clearly a test. Not only has God spoken, but they have had opportunity to ascertain that fact, and to know it for themselves. In all such cases, spiritual gifts are manifestly a test that cannot be disregarded except at the peril of eternal ruin.

[37]

19. One of the chief gifts of the Spirit of God that he has placed in the New Testament church is the gift of prophecy. [Joel 2:28](#); [Acts 2:1-4, 17, 18](#); [1 Corinthians 12:1-31](#); [14:1-5](#); [Ephesians 4:11-13](#). This gift the Bible connects with the closing work of this dispensation. [Revelation 12:17](#); [14:12](#); [19:10](#). Spiritual gifts do not, therefore, cease to be of importance in the sight of God, nor in that of his true people. And that message which is to accomplish the perfecting of the saints and to fit them for translation, has the Spirit of God connected with it, and speaking out in the management of its work.

20. Finally, in the reception of members into our churches, we desire on this subject to know two things: 1. That they believe the Bible doctrine of Spiritual gifts; 2. That they will candidly acquaint themselves with the visions of Sr. White, which have ever held so prominent place in this work. We believe that every person standing thus and carrying out this purpose will be guided in the way of truth

The Position of "The Bible, and the Bible Only" and the Relationship of This to
xlvi *the Writings of Ellen White*
and righteousness. ~~And those who occupy this ground, are never~~
denied all the time they desire to decide in this matter.

Ellen G. White Estate

Washington, D. C.

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