

## Uriah Smith on the Relationship of Ellen White to the Bible: 1863, 1868

SDA leader and longtime editor of the *Review and Herald* during the 1800s. All bold is mine.

In the *Review and Herald*, January 16, 1863, article, "Do We Discard the Bible by Endorsing the Visions?," Smith provided this helpful illustration on the relationship of Ellen White to the Bible:

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 quicksands 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.

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 Visions of Mrs. E. G. White: Manifestations of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures*  
(Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1868)

In this apologetic work, Smith answers various objections to the gift of prophecy as manifested in Ellen G. White. Here is his reply to the first objection:

## OBJECTION 1. - THE BIBLE AND THE BIBLE ALONE

The first and most general objection, and the one which contains the most specious fallacy, is the cry of "The Bible and the Bible Alone," as opposed to the visions. We do not receive the visions, say they; we have no need of them; the Bible is a sufficient rule of faith. We stand upon the Bible and the Bible alone. Such declarations, in connection with outspoken denunciations of the visions, are most effectually calculated to warp the judgment of the unguarded, and fasten upon their minds the impression that to receive the visions is to reject the Bible, and to cling to the Bible is to discard the visions. A greater fallacy never existed. Look at the fields which they respectively occupy. **The Bible is able to make us wise unto salvation and thoroughly furnish us unto all good works. Do the visions propose to invade this field, and erect a new standard, and give us another rule of faith and practice? Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, they are ever in harmony with the word, and ever refer to that as the test and standard.** To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

**But by taking our stand on the Bible, and the Bible alone, we bind ourselves to receive all that it teaches, and to acknowledge every agency which it assures us that God has placed in the Christian church.** Now the Bible has something to say on the subject of visions. It tells us that the present dispensation is the "dispensation of the Spirit." It assures us that during this time, the Comforter, or Spirit of truth, would be with the true church, to lead them into all truth. The prophecy to be fulfilled during the same time, is given us in these words: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." It tells us that this Spirit has certain distinct and definite channels through which it will operate; and that under its influence there will be manifestations of wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. 1Cor.12:8-10. And hence when the prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit in this dispensation is announced, it is immediately added, "And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." "And also," continues Joel, "upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out my Spirit," and Peter adds, as if it were an unfailing consequent, "And they shall prophesy." Acts 2:16-18. Here are set before us the operations of the Spirit of God, and in these it is declared that the daughters as well as the sons, the handmaids as well as the servants, are to participate.

**In making us wise unto salvation, and thoroughly furnishing us unto all good works, the Bible is thus careful to instruct us as to the place which the Spirit of God is designed to fill, and the part which it is to act. It declares that the means by which the saints are to be perfected, the work of the ministry performed, and the body of Christ edified, till we all come into the unity of the faith, are these various operations of the Spirit of God, in connection with the word. Now is there any such thing as standing upon the Bible and the Bible alone, and yet rejecting these agencies? There certainly is not.** Those who reject these things, and deny that God has made any provision for the instruction of his people in these days through the gifts of visions of prophecy in the church, just so depart from their doctrine of the Bible and the

Bible alone, and deny the Bible itself.

If any should say that they do not deny the doctrine of spiritual gifts as a Bible theory, but do not believe that the manifestations we now have are genuine, then this objection of the Bible and the Bible alone, is abandoned as opposed to the visions, and objections against them must be based on other grounds. Inasmuch as the Bible expressly provides for visions, no objections can be raised against any visions on the ground of the Bible and the Bible alone. It is all a fallacy. The only ground upon which any of them can be rejected, is to bring them to the word, the test, and show that their characteristics are not such as were to attend the genuine manifestations. And of this test we invite an application to the visions received among Seventh-day Adventists (pp. 13-15).

Later in the book, Smith echoed James White in *The Review and Herald*, February 25, 1868:

**The sacred Scriptures are given us as the rule of faith and duty, and we are commanded to search them.** If we fail to understand and fully obey the truths in consequences of not searching the Scriptures as we should, or a want of consecration and spiritual discernment, and God in mercy in his own time corrects us by some manifestation of the gifts of his Holy Spirit, instead of murmuring that he did not do it before, let us humbly acknowledge his mercy, and praise him for his infinite goodness in condescending to correct us at all. **Let the gifts have their proper place in the church. God has never set them in the very front, and commanded us to look to them to lead us in the path of truth, and the way to Heaven. His word he has magnified. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are man's lamp to light up his path to the kingdom. Follow that. But if you err from Bible truth, and are in danger of being lost, it may be that God will in time of his choice correct you, and bring you back to the Bible and save you** (p. 92).