

THE OBJECTIVES OF LIBERALISM IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

“Men are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men; and their assertions are taken as truth. The people have received man-made theories. So the gospel is perverted, and the Scripture misapplied. As in the days of Christ, the light of truth is pushed into the background. Men’s theories and suppositions are honored before the Word of the Lord God of hosts. The truth is counteracted by error. The Word of God is wrested, divided and distorted by higher criticism. Jesus is acknowledged, only to be betrayed by a kiss.”

—Ellen G. White, *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, February 1, 1897

A June 1971 issue of *Newsweek*, in effect, foretold the future. For that story, its editors interviewed several prominent Adventists who were hardworking undercover liberals.

“[There are] liberals in the SDA church, who would like to recover the early Adventist tradition of dissent” (“*The Day of the Adventists*,” *Newsweek*, June 7, 1971, p. 65). “Tradition of dissent” is scholarly code for their objective of introducing rebellion in the minds of their students against the historic standards and doctrines of our people. The liberals went on to say:

“You will find few seminary professors who admit to the 6,000 year theory, and many Adventists no longer believe that the days of Creation were each 24 hours long.”—*Op. cit.*, p. 66.

Then the liberals explained to the reporters interviewing them exactly how they planned to go about it; they told the basis of their attack:

“As a first step toward recovering the dissenting spirit of the past, liberal Adventists contend, the church ought to rid itself of dependence upon an exaggerated Biblical literalism.”—*Ibid.*

There are even more hardworking liberals in our church today than back then. And many of them work quite openly now. They can because they have been so successful in carefully training and graduating over two decades of liberals who have entered the work as ministerial interns and gradually moved up through the ranks to assume important positions in our largest churches, in our conferences and higher administrative levels, and editorial offices of our publishing houses.

They have also been doing their work well, to eliminate “dependence upon . . . Biblical literalism.” And what does that mean? It means to stop taking the Bible as it reads, stop believing its words and, instead, read into every sentence the sceptical interpretations of a sin-loving heart.

There is more than one way to do away with God’s Word, and the liberals have been busily trying to do it for quite some time.

TRAINED IN WORLDLY UNIVERSITIES

Where did they get these ideas? They learned them at the feet of professed Christian worldlings who are in charge of the religion departments of the great secular universities of the land.

But why did our men go there to get their training, when we had teachers in our own schools and an abundance of truth in the collected writings of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy?

They did it so they could acquire doctoral degrees. This is the origin of the corruption; this is why our bright young men went to the cesspool in order to drink the wisdom of atheists, agnostics, and assorted sceptics.

(See *The Branson Report on Accreditation—Part 1-4 [DH-25-28]* to learn more about the crisis in the early 1930s, when our leaders tried to stop the mounting pressure for accreditation and degrees.)

Although our colleges in North America rushed to gain accreditation by the late 1930s and our Bible teachers began doing it by late 1950s, yet it was not until the latter 1960s that the full effect of the

changeover began to be felt. At first, liberal sentiments were quietly disseminated; but, by the late 1970s, the work to instill modernist bias in the students was rapidly moving forward.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF LIBERALISM

There are three types of people: Bible believers, Bible rejecters, and Bible doubters. The rejecters generally show themselves for what they are, but the doubters make excellent agents which Satan can use to instill skepticism in the minds of sincere seekers after God. By attending worldly universities, our men and women place themselves at the feet of Satan, to be taught by him in the deep things of subtle skepticism. While there, they are taught the devilish science of clever doubting, insinuation, quibbling, ridicule, and reinterpretation.

Here are four of the principles they are taught:

(1) The present is the key to the past. If it cannot happen now, it never happened earlier. (2) Every effect has a natural cause. There are no such things as miracles. (3) Be skeptical of what you read in the Bible. Better yet, reinterpret it to fit your own selfish scheme of things. (4) Carry on your work with all due subtlety. The twisting methods of the serpent will help you keep from being fired while the changeover is in progress.

Here are some working methods:

Instill in the student the grand motto: *Skepticism is the key to finding truth*. Make each student a shadow of yourself, so he will go out into the church and its institutions and disseminate doubting and error wherever he goes. Mold him to believe with all his heart that Scripture cannot be trusted; that its clear, searching truths must always be explained away. God's Word must be twisted to agree with the desires of men who love sin, want to indulge in it untrammelled by forbiddings, and want to carry their sins to the very gates of heaven.

At this point, it would be well to learn more about what our men and women are taught in the outside universities.

Whereas classic liberalism denies God entirely, moderate liberalism (the kind destroying our colleges) admits of His existence and that the Bible has some kind of God-given authenticity to it. But moderate liberals still do not believe it is fully inspired, trustworthy, and has an authority we should bow to. The liberals in our ranks are moderates.

THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD

How do the liberals manage to read all their worldly ideas into the Bible? They use the *historical-critical method* of Bible study.

This deceitful, sceptical process traces its origins back centuries. By the seventeenth century men

were using it, but the clearest statement of the historical-critical method was formulated by the nineteenth-century German theologian, Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923). He developed the six approaches to Bible study which our men and women, attending outside universities, are instructed in.

In reality, the historical-critical method is "*Bible criticism*"; it is disbelieving the commands, the promises, and the historical details of Scripture. In short, it is not taking God at His Word. It is a denial that the Bible is valid or applicable to our lives today.

Here are six branches of this satanic science, as formulated by Troeltsch:

1 - *Literary-source criticism* assumes that the Bible writers were just copying some earlier manuscripts or got their ideas from pagan sources. The search is for "literary sources." Sound familiar? That is what some of our people tried to do with the Spirit of Prophecy in the early 1980s, during the "plagiarism" witch hunt for sources which were never found. (See our forthcoming book on this; we will announce its publication date.)

2 - *Form, or tradition, criticism* goes a step beyond the search for literary sources—and speculates as to what were the "oral traditions" that those supposed pre-writings were based on! All this may seem ridiculous to you and me; but, to young men trained in these godless theories, it is very serious business. They go out from those institutions of agnosticism, determined to spread the virus.

3 - *Redaction criticism* theorizes as to what might have been in the minds of the supposed "editors" who changed the Biblical writings still more and placed them into their final shape.

4 - *Comparative-religion criticism* attempts to determine which pagan religions the cumulative writers and editors of the Bible got their ideas from. (Surely, it is assumed, they did not get them from God.)

5 - *Historical criticism* seeks to apply the findings of archaeology and secular historical sources to the Bible. But, in the pursuit of this task, it is assumed that, whenever there a lack of clarity or correlation, secular sources are always considered to be more correct. In addition, through a twisted dating pattern, archaeological findings are dated to an incorrect time period, so they will not appear to agree with (and thereby vindicate) Biblical events. (See our study on this: "*Archaeological Dating*," which is chapter 35 in our three-volume *Evolution Disproved Series*.) Two key aspects of historical criticism is (1) to misdate Scripture in order to invalidate prophecy; and, (2) if a Biblical event cannot be established via archaeology (and they gener-

ally won't because of incorrect dating assumptions; see the above named chapter in our *Evolution Disproved Series*), then it must be a fable which never occurred.

6 - *Structural criticism* tries to find imagined causal relationships between the wording of the Bible and imagined "implicit literary structures" of all literature.

The above six points deal with the "evolutionary development" which the Bible is said to have taken from ancient witchcraft and polytheistic cultures, down through oral traditions, past writers, to editors into its final form, which is indebted to contemporary heathen literature and not agreeable with archaeological findings.

DANGER IN DEPARTING FROM GOD'S WORD

What a maze of skepticism all that is! Yet our future college and university teachers have to run that gauntlet, in order to be "qualified" to teach your sons and daughters. Yet, if they do not submit to that agnostic and atheistic training, they will not be hired by our colleges and universities.

Of course, upon graduating from such institutions, many sincere young people feel they can "use" those theories and methods without being tainted by them. But those many years of training have damaged their own thinking.

It is not possible to partly use liberal methods. *The whole package must be thrown out the window!* We must take the Writings as an accurate, fully inspired, message from God to our souls. We must submit our lives to those messages, be corrected by them, and be changed by them. Anything less than this is to deny them.

And this principle applies both to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. There is no such thing as half-inspired or portions inspired. Over the years, several folk have told me, "I accepted the idea that part of the Spirit of Prophecy was written by other people; and now I do not know which part to believe!" They often end up throwing it all out.

If you want to be saved, accept the whole Bible and the whole Spirit of Prophecy as entirely from God. If you want to make shipwreck of faith, start tearing out the pages here and there. Soon you will have nothing left. And all the while, Satan will be smiling that hideous smile of his.

Herman Hoen, in Canada; Charles Wheeling, in Alabama; Vern Bates, in Oregon; and all the rest of those preachers who say that Ellen White did not write all the Spirit of Prophecy and that it is not all fully inspired of God will have to answer for what they have done.

As with the Spirit of Prophecy, so with the Bible:

"[In spite of years of] skeptical assault the book still remains, and the men who are now laboring to destroy it may as well undertake to demolish the pyramids of Egypt with a tack hammer. Infidels die, but this book still lives. Scoffers fade like the flowers and wither like the grass, but above their graves this book marches triumphantly on, and on its pages we read in characters of light, 'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOREVER.'"—*H.L. Hastings, Will the Old Book Stand? 1923, p. 349.*

"No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure for his own. When the landscape darkens and the trembling pilgrim comes to the valley named 'of the shadow,' he is not afraid to enter.

"He takes the rod and staff of Scripture in his hand; he says to friend and comrade, 'Goodby, we shall meet again;' and comforted by that support, he goes toward the lonely pass as one who walks through darkness into light."—*Henry Van Dyke.*

FIVE DANGEROUS CONCEPTS

There are certain concepts which the liberals try to foist onto God's people. We do well to be aware of them. They are regularly used in our schools and churches, to deceive the faithful into believing a lie:

1 - Apply different meanings to commonly understood words. Take a Biblical term (such as atonement, sanctuary, Sabbath, incarnation, resurrection, inspiration, etc.). Empty the term of its Biblical meaning and inject it with a liberal meaning. Then preach and teach it. The audience will be bewildered by the changed meanings to words they know and love and, while they are still bewildered, you will gradually win them over.

The liberals will tell you that they believe in the "inspiration" of the Bible. What they mean is that the Bible is inspired the way Shakespeare, a modern novel, or Beethoven's music is. "Oh, yes, I believe the Bible is inspired!" Satisfied by his answer, you keep listening to his preaching and trying to figure it out—until you come to like the skeptical approach.

You will be told that, yes, Ellen White was a true prophet. What is meant is that Joan of Ark, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Theresa also are.

2 - Nothing spiritual ever occurs; everything has a material worldly basis. There is no supernatural; there are no miracles.

But, if you suspect this and inquire, you will be told the virgin birth is a "miracle." But, what he means is that every birth is a miracle.

Words are disguised to say what you want to hear, but mean something quite different, a different view which they are slowly leading you toward.

Nearly every one of us has encountered an Adventist preacher who does this. Afterward, you are wondering, "What is this all about? Am I losing my thinking?"

If you grasp what I am trying to explain, henceforth you will be better able to identify the handiwork of these liberals.

3 - Everyone is divine, and God has no justice. Just as the devil said in the beginning, so believe the liberals. And they want you to believe it too. Heaven is your home; you are going to live forever; all the religions of the world are headed to the same place; we are brothers to everyone. The social gospel is the best gospel. There is no need of grace; and, of course, you can forget about the law of God. Live to enjoy yourself, belong to a religious club (the local "church"), and work to change the social order—and you will have done all you need to in this life.

4 - The correct theology is whatever the latest fad happens to be. It may be so-called "liberation theology," which teaches that the purpose of religion is to liberate the poorer classes from the power of the wealthy and overthrow governments. This is very popular in several Catholic nations.

Or it may be "feminist theology"; we must liberate women, so they can take over the churches. Or it may be "Freudian theology"; we should use psychological theories to explain the Bible.

THE LIBERAL ERROR OF "NEW LIGHT"

5 - Progressive revelation is another important liberal principle. It is also called progressive truth and "present truth." This liberal concept teaches that new truths are ever emerging, which are not in God's Word. And, we are assured, it is the theologians (defined as men trained in secular universities) who are the best ones to think them up.

Even though it is not in Scripture, it is said to be inspired truth anyway. When asked, "How can you be sure?" the answer is because it is *new*; therefore it must be "new light." "It must be new light, because Ellen White said we would have new light." You will find variations of this error in many places (including among many historic believers). But it is neither safe nor reliable.

In truth, there will always be new light for you and me—but that "new light" will always, only, be found in the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy. It will be clearly stated and will be found in more than one passage. We will ever be finding, in God's Word, what appears to us individually as new light. It was always there, plainly written in the books; we just had not found it before.

But, in strong contrast, the liberal error is that

God has not revealed all truth in His Written Word and we must look outside the Word to find it.

Do not be like the liberals who direct men to fallible humans and their speculations. My friend, point men to God and His Word. If you do not do this, souls may be lost because you pointed them down wrong paths.

Be afraid of the "new light" these men have for you. It frequently comes premised on the idea that it is brand new truth, not given in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. —Well, if that is so, *then you have no normative standard by which to check whether it is right or wrong!* The best thing is to immediately depart from such men and take your loved ones with you.

"The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the Word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested."—*Great Controversy*, p. vii.

"In all His teachings, He [Christ] dwelt upon the unchangeable positions of Bible truth."—*Upward Look*, p. 313.

THE EMBATTLED WORD FROM THE 1970s TO NOW

Over the years, there have been faithful men among denominational leaders who have sought to maintain the authority of the Bible. Because of the increasing efforts of liberals in our colleges to teach modernist views, a series of three Bible conferences were convened one year in the early 1970s. Entitled the *Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics, 1974*, it attempted to confront the growing historical-critical challenges already bearing fruit in our church. The conference series was organized by the Biblical Research Institute and held at three pivotal schools: Andrews University, Pacific Union College, and Southern College. These gatherings examined the methods of Biblical interpretation, especially the historical-critical method.

In each conference, it was decided that the historical-critical method should not be used. I suspect the liberals kept under cover, realizing that it would not be politically wise to do much objecting. As in several other denominations, our liberals have found they do best carrying their work forward with stealth rather than publicly having a showdown with leadership. The result was the publication of a book, *Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, which rejected the historical-critical method.

Following this, as we know all too well, the mod-

Continued on the next tract

More WAYMARKS - from —

PILGRIMS REST

HCR 77, BOX 38A - BEERSHEBA SPRINGS, TN 37305 USA

THE OBJECTIVES OF LIBERALISM IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

ernists continued their work in our colleges, churning out, year by year, more liberal pastors.

In October 1979, one blatant liberal presentation (at Pacific Union College, before a packed applause-filled audience) got Desmond Ford in trouble, and Glacier View occurred the next summer. (See our earliest *Waymark* tracts.) At that time, in a telegram sent to N.C. Wilson on Sabbath, nearly the entire staff of Pacific Union College demanded that Ford not be fired, since he was not teaching error.

In 1981, a delegation of North American Bible “scholars” (i.e. college and university Bible teachers, and some editors and writers) met in Washington, D.C.; and, with great self-confidence, they declared that no one should worry. The scholars were smart enough to use the historical-critical method, without tainting either their conclusions or themselves with liberalism! How duped by the devil can men become?

“Adventist scholars could indeed use the descriptive [aspects of the historical-critical] method (that is, source criticism, redaction criticism, etc.) without adopting the naturalistic presuppositions affirmed by the thorough-going practitioners of the method.”—*Statement by North American Bible Scholars, at Theological Consultation II, 1981* (cf. Alden Thompson, “Are Adventists Afraid of Bible Study?” *Spectrum*, April 1985, pp. 58, 56.)

Entitled “*Consultation II*,” this meeting convened in Washington, D.C., from September 30 to October 3, 1981, and was attended by a number of denominational leaders.

The “scholars” came up with the consensus statement (referred to above), in which they said “the descriptive aspects of the so-called historical-critical method could indeed be separated from naturalistic presuppositions and thus could be used by Adventist scholars.” (See Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers. Review*, 1991, pp. 271-272.)

Poor, fallible men; they had been so thoroughly indoctrinated by their doctoral professors at outside universities, that they could not now bear to part with their precious historical-critical method of reinterpreting Scriptural passages.

Another official rejection of the historical-critical method occurred in the late 1980s; this one at

an Annual Council in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. A document was drafted and approved. Called the *Rio Document, 1986*, it called on our educators throughout the world field to reject historical criticism in both forms: the classical method (denying the miracles and supernatural events in the Bible) and the “modified use of this method” which retains the principle of criticism and subordinates the Bible to human reason.

“The historical-critical method minimizes the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments. In addition, . . . such a method de-emphasizes the divine element in the Bible as an inspired book (including its resulting unity) and depreciates or misunderstands apocalyptic prophecy and the eschatological portions of the Bible.”—*From the Rio Document, 1986*.

“[We must] avoid relying on the use of the presuppositions and the resultant deductions associated with the historical-critical method . . . Even a modified use . . . of the historical-critical method that retains the principle of criticism which subordinates the Bible to human reason is unacceptable to Adventists.”—*Ibid*.

LIBERALS MUCH STRONGER BY 1986

But by 1986, when the *Rio Document* was issued, the liberals in the colleges were far stronger, and many openly expressed their derision for the document.

The situation in our schools was clearly worsening. And that meant it was worsening for all of us.

Raymond Cottrell denounced the *Rio document* as “myopic” and an attempt to bring the Bible teachers into bondage (*Raymond Cottrell, “Blame It on Rio,” Adventist Currents, March 1987, p. 33*).

Yet, as our readers well-know, it is the interpretations of these liberals which have produced the moral and theological crises we now face in standards and doctrines. Placing men’s ideas above the plain statements of God’s Written Word have consistently been the problem.

Worldlings among us were angry that they had not been given a green light to proceed as fast as possible to corrupt the church. Instead, they would have to continue their work more stealthily for a time.

At the same time, there were faithful men who mourned over the increasing losses to the faith and the mounting apostasy in the ranks.

Speaking of the liberals in our churches and

colleges, one faithful church leader (now deceased) wrote these words about the liberals among us who are gradually, inexorably taking us out to the Ecumenicals:

"They are committed believers. Many of them exhibit the beauty of Christian virtues in their lives. Most of them love the church. They would like to share the faith and certainties of our forefathers, but in the honesty of their hearts, they do not have them. They are unable to see the uniqueness of our message, the distinctiveness of our identity, the eschatological dimension of our hope, or the urgency of our mission. Representing a wide spectrum of religious thought, they attempt to reinterpret traditional theological Seventh-day Adventist thinking by dressing some of our old doctrines in what appear to them to be new and attractive semantic garments."—*Enoch de Oliveira, "A Trojan Horse Within the Church," Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, Spring 1991, p. 7.*

Throughout all these momentous years of change, as modernism has gradually gained the ascendancy in our colleges and universities, *Spectrum* magazine and its regional Adventist Forum meetings have served as a special watering hole for the liberal thinkers in our denomination. Anything and everything liberal has found approval in its pages.

"In a well-documented study, Alberto R. Timm, a scholar in Adventist studies, noted that the Association of Adventist Forums and its *Spectrum* magazine became the main forum for those who assume a 'revisionist-critical stand' on the church's understanding of the inspiration of Bible writers and Ellen White . . . See Alberto R. Timm, 'History of Inspiration in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (1844-1994),' a paper read at the 1993 Scholars' Convention of the Adventist Theological Society, Silver Spring, Md, November 19, 1993, pp. 57-58."—*Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, Receiving the Word, p. 95.*

HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD ALMOST UNIVERSAL IN OUR COLLEGES

It is of the highest interest that Raymond Cottrell admitted that, over a decade ago, nearly all our Bible teachers were using the historical-critical method:

"During the late 1930s, Seventh-day Adventist Bible scholars began using these historical-critical principles and procedures in their study; and today, half a century later, all but a very few do so routinely."—*Raymond Cottrell, "Blame It on Rio," Adventist Currents, March 1987, p. 33.*

Here are concurring statements:

"Can this approach—often called the 'historical-critical method'—be used by Bible students who hold a conservative view of scriptural inspiration? Yes . . . Indeed, virtually all Adventist exegetes of Scripture do historical-critical methodology, *even if they are not willing to use the term.* The historical-critical method

deserves a place in the armamentarium [weapon room] of Adventists who are serious about understanding their Bibles."—*John Brunt, "A Parable of Jesus as a Clue to Biblical Interpretation," in Adventism in America, ed. Gary Land, 1986, p. 226.*

Brunt, a Bible teacher at Walla Walla, is one of many strong defenders of the historical-critical method. So is Alden Thompson, also at Walla Walla, who wrote this:

"The clear majority of Adventist biblical scholars . . . favor the use of such descriptive methodologies [of the historical-critical method, such as source criticism, redaction criticism, form criticism, and tradition criticism]."—*Alden Thompson, "Theological Consultation II," Spectrum, December 1981, p. 45.*

"The tools [historical-critical methodologies] that have been developed to help us understand the humanity of both the living Word and the written word . . . he [the scholar] utilizes them carefully."—*Richard Coffen, "Taboo on Tools?" Ministry, September 1975, pp. 7-8.*

"The question must not be whether we will employ historical [-critical] methods (because we already do to some extent) but how far we rely on them."—*William Johnsson, "SDA Presuppositions to Biblical Studies," paper presented to Adventist scholars attending the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Convention, Chicago, Illinois, October 29, 1975, pp. 44-45.*

Regarding the above statement, it should be noted that, in order to hide their methods, Adventist liberals frequently refer to the historical-critical method as the "historical method." (*See Cottrell, "Blame it on Rio," p. 33; Cottrell, "The Historical Method of Interpretation," Review, April 7, 1977, pp. 17-18; "A Subtle Danger in the Historical Method," Review April 14, 1977, p. 12.*) Jerry Gladson mentions that the so-called "historical method" is just another name for the historical-critical method, which he himself uses (*Jerry Gladson, "Taming Historical Criticism," Spectrum, April 1988, p. 34.*).

Can one use the historical-critical method just a little? Eta Linnemann, a major non-Adventist Bible criticism writer of many years, repented and returned to God, threw all her writings and articles away, and pled with others to do the same. She wrote this:

"One can no more be a *little* historical-critical than a *little* pregnant."—*Eta Linnemann, Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? 1990, p. 123.*

ALDEN THOMPSON'S BOOK

In 1991, the Review issued a major theological work, produced by Alden Thompson of Walla Walla College. In this controversial book, based on the

historical-critical method, he says this:

“To a large extent, this book simply describes the approach to Christian living that Adventists have always practiced but simply *have been reluctant to admit in print*. If anything is unusual, then, it is the candor with which the ‘illustrations’ are laid.”—*Alden Thompson, Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers, 1991, p. 143.*

Writing in *Ministry* magazine, McIver said this about Thompson’s book:

“*Inspiration* is about the more theological topic of inspiration of the Scriptures, at times it does deal with issues of methodology and approach, and on occasion specifically with the historical-critical method. Some involved in the hermeneutical debate have perceived this book as the archtypical product of historical-critical methodology.”—*Robert McIver, “The Historical-Critical Method: The Adventist Debate,” Ministry magazine, March 1996, p. 16.*

It is very significant that this book, *Inspiration*, which was in reality an educational workshop for our people in the historical-critical method, was printed by the leading publishing house in our denomination, in total violation of the 1986 Annual Council’s position.

Thompson’s *Inspiration* was the boldest attempt, up to that time, to popularize higher criticism for the consumption by laymen and students in our church.

THE WELCOME TABLE

Since then, we have been especially deluged with articles and books in defense of women’s ordination. The peculiar ideas found in those publications represent the historical-critical method in operation: Take a Scriptural passage, distort it so that it will fit into whatever worldly mold happens to be in fashion at the time; that is the liberal method of Bible interpretation.

An excellent example of this is *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, released in 1995 and containing essays by fourteen Adventist men and women. They include leading church workers such as Bert Haloviak, Kit Watts, V. Norskov Olsen; as well as present, and former, college and university teachers such as Raymond Cottrell, Fritz Guy, Edwin Zackrison, and Ralph Neil; along with a varied assortment of feminists.

(In a similar Adventist feminist book, one lesbian Adventist pastor declares how she thanks God for giving her the special gift of being able to enjoy being married to a woman. (See *Frontiers of the Battle Over God’s Word [WM-746-747, p. 3].*)

Keith Burton, an Adventist New Testament scholar, wrote a paper exposing the historical-critical assumptions which underlay the women’s ordi-

nation arguments in this book. He concludes with these words:

“The table around which we are warmly invited to sit is one that already accommodates those who have attacked the relevance of Biblical authority; those who wish to pretend that the gnostic image of the primeval and eschatological androgyne is the one toward which Adventists should be moving; those whose interest is on the acquisition of corporate power rather than the evangelization of a dying world; and finally, those who confuse the indiscriminating limitation of the familial and ecclesiastical roles that have been defined by the same Spirit.”—*Keith Burton, “The Welcome Table: A Critical Evaluation, unpublished manuscript, 1995, Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University.*

It is of interest that none other than Raymond Cottrell admits the liberal basis for the Biblical interpretations found in *The Welcome Table*:

“As a matter of fact, those who favor [women’s] ordination do so on the basis of the historical [-critical] method.”—*Raymond Cottrell, “A Guide to Reliable Interpretation,” in The Welcome Table, p. 84.*

Here is an example (from the writings of a non-Adventist Protestant) of the thinking of the feminists:

“The Bible was written in a patriarchal society by the people, mostly men, whom the system kept on top. It embodies the androcentric, that is, male-centered presuppositions of that social world, and it legitimizes the patriarchal, that is male-dominant, social structures that held that world together. Its language is overwhelmingly male-oriented, both in its reference to God and in reference to people. In short, the Bible is a book written by men in order to tell their story for their advantage. As such, it confronts both women and justice-inspired men with an enormous problem. It is not at all certain that the Bible can survive this challenge, that it can retain the allegiance of people called to justice and freedom in a postmodern world.”—*Sandra M. Schneiders, “Does the Bible Have a Postmodern Message?” in Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralistic World, ed. Frederic B. Burnham, 1989, p. 65.*

Francois Voltaire died over 200 years ago, yet he would have rejoiced to see the feminists arising to help in the cause of trying to destroy the Bible.

And now it is coming into our own denomination.

“Our ideology takes precedence over the ideology of the [Biblical] literature.”—*Danna Nolan Fewell, “Feminist Reading of the Hebrew Bible,” Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Vol. 39, 1987, p. 78.*

A LIBERAL IS CONVERTED

Eta Linnemann, Ph.D., was once one of liberalism’s ablest defenders. Thoroughly schooled in historical-critical theology, this Lutheran Bible

scholar taught it for years in the European universities and wrote books and articles in defense of it.

Like many of our own Ph.D.s, this German scholar had been trained in agosticism at the university where she obtained her doctorate, and afterward labored feverishly to spread the unfaith.

But then Linnemann was converted to Christ. And it made all the difference in the world. *This is what our Adventist scholars need: a genuine conversion to Christ.*

In later years, Linnemann did all she could to atone for her years of skepticism. Repudiating her former writings, she urged others to abandon the deadly historical-critical method and return to God as she had done.

Here is her statement:

“Why do you say ‘No!’ to historical-critical theology? I have been confronted with this question, and I wish to state at the outset: My ‘No!’ to historical-critical theology stems from my ‘Yes!’ to my wonderful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to the glorious redemption He accomplished for me on Golgotha.

“As a student of Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Fuchs, as well as of Friedrich Gogarten and Gerhard Ebeling, I had the best professors which historical-critical theology could offer to me. And I did not do too badly in other respects, either. My first book turned out to be a best-seller. I became professor of theology and religious education . . . [and] was inducted into the Society of New Testament Studies. I had the satisfaction of an increasing degree of recognition from my colleagues.

“Intellectually comfortable with historical-critical theology, I was deeply convinced that I was rendering a service to God with my theological work and contributing to the proclamation of the gospel. Then, however, on the basis of various observations, discoveries, and a resulting self-awareness, I was forced to concede two things I did not wish: (1) No ‘truth’ could emerge from this ‘scientific work on the Biblical text,’ and (2) such labor does not serve the proclamation of the gospel . . .

“Today I realize that historical-critical theology’s monopolistic character and world-wide influence is a sign of God’s judgment (Romans 1:18-32). God predicted this in His Word: ‘For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear’ (2 Timothy 4:3). He also promised to send a ‘powerful delusion so that they will believe a lie’ (2 Thessalonians 2:11). *God is not dead, nor has He resigned. He reigns, and He is already executing judgment on those who declare Him dead or assert that He is a false god who does nothing, either good or evil.*

“Today I know that I owe those initial insights to

the beginning effects of God’s grace . . . Finally God Himself spoke to my heart by means of a Christian brother’s words. By God’s grace and love I entrusted my life to Jesus.

“He immediately took my life into His saving grasp and began to transform it radically.

“I became aware of what folly it is, given what God is doing today, to maintain that the miracles reported in the New Testament never took place. Suddenly it was clear to me that my teaching was a case of the blind leading the blind. I repented for the way I had misled my students . . .

“By God’s grace I experienced Jesus as the One whose name is above all names. I was permitted to realize that Jesus is God’s Son, born of a virgin. He is the Messiah and the Son of Man; such titles were not merely conferred on Him as the result of human deliberation. I recognized, first mentally, but then in a vital, experiential way, that Holy Scripture is inspired.

“Not because of human talk but because of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in my heart, I have clear knowledge that my former perverse teaching was sin. At the same time I am happy and thankful that this sin is forgiven me because Jesus bore it on the cross.

“That is why I say ‘No!’ to historical-critical theology. I regard everything that I taught and wrote before I entrusted my life to Jesus as refuse [garbage]. I wish to use this opportunity to mention that I have pitched my two books . . . along with my contributions to journals, anthologies, and *Festschriften*. Whatever of these writings I had in my possession I threw into the trash with my own hands in 1978. I ask you sincerely to do the same thing with any of them you may have on your own bookshelf.”—*Eta Linnemann, Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? Reflections of a Bultmannian Turned Evangelical, translated by Robert W. Yarbrough, 1990, pp. 17-20 [emphasis hers].*

A number of our Bible scholars had an opportunity to hear her testimony. She addressed members of the Adventist Theological Society and later the faculty and students of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Her testimony was printed in the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Autumn issue, 1994, pp. 19-36.

So, in the providence of God, many of our liberal Bible theologians have had the opportunity to be confronted by her stirring witness.

Oh, that they would heed it, before it is too late. Those men have the Bible, and they have the wealth of light in the Spirit of Prophecy. Yet they want to follow after the ways of the world.

—Vance Ferrell