

The Gulf, pt. 1 (Helping the Layperson Identify the Historical-Critical Method):

Larry Kirkpatrick, Mentone SDA Church, 5 April 2003. Notes only. For full text see:
<http://www.greatcontroversy.org/documents/sermons/sermons-kir/kir-gulf1.php3>

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called" (1 Timothy 6:20).

"The warnings of the word of God regarding the perils surrounding the Christian church belong to us today. As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives" (Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 474).

"What is the condition in the world today? Is not faith in the Bible as effectually destroyed by the higher criticism and speculation of today as it was by tradition and rabbinism in the days of Christ?" (Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, p. 142).

"A day or two later, some one brought to Elder Starr a pamphlet containing the sermon of an influential Wesleyan minister delivered at a recent conference held in Dunedin, in which he defended the 'higher criticism' of the Bible, and made light of the opinion that it is a divine book, and that all portions of it are inspired. This led to more lessons on this subject, and a sermon on the 'Higher Criticism' that was well attended by the people of Napier. We were surprised to see the extent to which our own brethren had been affected by this infidelity. We see more and more clearly, that, in all our labours, the Bible must be exalted, and that our people must come to know the wisdom and the power that are in the Word of God" (Ellen G. White, *Bible Echo*, June 1, 1893).

"Night, dark and portentous, is enclosing the Christian world. Apostasy from God's commandments is evidence of this night, deep, dark, and apparently impenetrable. Systems that make the truth of God of none effect are cherished. 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 honoured 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. Apostasy exists, and will enclose the world till the last. Its hideous character and darkening influence will be seen in the maddening draughts dealt out from Babylon . . . Satan had the highest education that could be obtained. This education he received under the greatest of all teachers. When men talk of higher criticism; when they pass their judgment upon the word of God, call their attention to the fact that they have forgotten who was the first and wisest critic. He has had thousands of years of practical experience. He it is who teaches the so-called higher critics of the world today. God will punish all those who, as higher critics, exalt themselves, and criticise God's Holy word" (Ellen G. White, *Bible Echo*, February 1, 1897).

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them . . . But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Ephesians 5:11, 13).

Rio Statement Excerpt (Underlined emphasis added)

"This statement is addressed to all members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the purpose of providing guidelines on how to study the Bible, both the trained biblical scholar and others."

"Seventh-day Adventists recognize and appreciate the contributions of those biblical scholars throughout history who have developed useful and reliable methods of Bible study consistent with the claims and teachings of Scripture. Adventists are committed to the acceptance of biblical truth and are willing to follow it, using all methods of interpretation consistent with what Scripture says of itself."

"In recent decades the most prominent method in biblical studies has been known as the historical-critical method. Scholars who use this method, as classically formulated, operate on the basis of presuppositions which, prior to studying the biblical text, reject the reliability of accounts of miracles and other supernatural events narrated in the Bible. Even a modified use of this method that retains the principle of criticism which subordinates the Bible to human reason is unacceptable to Adventists."

"The historical-critical method minimizes the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments. In addition, because such a method de-emphasizes the divine element in the Bible as an inspired book (including its resultant unity) and depreciates or misunderstands apocalyptic prophecy and the eschatological portions of the Bible, we urge Adventist Bible students to avoid relying on the use of the presuppositions and the resultant deductions associated with the historical-critical method." (The above statement was approved and voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council Session in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, October 12, 1986).

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Classical Liberal or Liberalism A	Moderate Liberal or Liberalism B	Seventh-day Adventist
Historical Critical Method		Historical-Grammatical
Presuppositions:	Presuppositions:	Presuppositions:
1. Correlation. No miracles 2. Analogy. The present explains the past. 3. Criticism. Launch-point is subjective, doubt text. (Trust is in the internal)	We can use the historical-critical method without its presuppositions. <i>(But then from whence do the following principles arise?)</i>	1. In the Beginning God. 2. Revelation. The Past explains the present. 3. Faith. Launch-point is objective, outside of self. (Trust is in the external)
Resultant Deductions	Resultant Deductions	Resultant Deductions
Bible not inspired	Some parts of Bible more inspired than other parts	Whole Bible inspired without degrees
Bible not trustworthy	Bible not fully trustworthy	Bible fully trustworthy
The Bible, like all other writings, is culturally conditioned	Bible contains some cultural conditioning	Biblical infallibility not compromised by possibility of conditioning
Bible not authoritative on salvation or any other topic	Bible is authoritative on salvation, not other topics	Bible is fully authoritative
Submission compromised	Submission Compromised	Reason Submits to God

