

CHAPTER XVI

Seventh-Day Adventism

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

William Miller is the forerunner of Seventh-Day Adventism, although the person most identified with the movement is Ellen G. White.

In 1818 Miller, a New England farmer, predicted Christ was coming again on March 21, 1843. (This date was decided upon by interpreting the 2300 days of the prophecy in Daniel 8:14 as years and adding 2300 years to 457 B.C.) Of course, Christ did not return that year.

The date was changed to October 24, 1844. Again, Christ did not appear. Miller was bitterly disappointed. Before his death in 1849 he even said, “We expected the personal coming of Christ at that time; and now to contend that we were not mistaken is dishonest. We should never be ashamed frankly to confess our errors. I have no confidence in any of the new theories that grew out of the movement . . .” (Good News Broadcaster, June, 1964).

However, many who followed Miller started their own groups, and one of them became the foundation of modern Seventh-Day Adventism. Ellen G. White was one of the leaders of this group. Instead of admitting a mistake in calculation as Miller had done, this group insisted that Christ had come in 1844. They said instead of coming back to the earth, He entered the “Heavenly Sanctuary” to (supposedly) finish the atonement and that when Christ is through with the atonement, He will come the rest of the way to the earth. (See Heb. 10: 12—the atonement is finished!)

Mrs. White did a lot of writing. Among her books are *The Desire of the Ages*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *The Acts of the Apostles, Prophets and Kings*, and a very popular booklet, *Steps to Christ*. This booklet has had a distribution of millions. The attitude of those who follow her is that there are no errors in her writings. However, not all Adventists concede that she is a prophet in the same sense as Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.

Some Christian leaders of our day are saying that modern Adventism has departed enough from its original view that it should not be considered “heresy.” If its errors were completely on minor points, we might tend to agree with them. However, since it puts works into salvation, we have no other choice than to point out that such teaching is definitely unscriptural.

BRIEF DOCTRINAL COVERAGE OF ADVENTISM

Questions on Doctrine, 1957, says that Ellen G. White’s book *The Great Controversy* is “one of our standard books.” In this book are found many doctrines strange to the Word of God.

SALVATION

Mrs. White says, “As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed in Jesus come in review before God . . . Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased . . . All who have truly repented of sin, AND by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted

WORTHY of eternal life” (The Great Controversy, p. 483).

According to this statement of Mrs. White’s, even though one “believes on Jesus” he will still be lost if he dies with any sins on his record that he had not repented of. But if a person believes in Jesus AND his character is good, God will give him what he has EARNED through his faith and worthy deeds ...eternal life.

Remember that Romans 11 :6 tells us if a person is saved by grace then he CANNOT be saved by works also. Grace means “mercy,” and if you work for something and receive a wage for it, that wage is not given to you out of mercy: It is given to you because it is owed to you . . . you deserve it (Romans 4:4, 5). But NO MAN DESERVES SALVATION. God does not owe man anything! We deserve hell, but God in grace gives eternal life to those who trust in Christ and His payment for all their sin. Eternal life does not come to us through faith AND “worthy deeds.” It doesn’t come through faith AND anything. It comes through FAITH ALONE in Christ’s finished work for us. What passage in Galatians comes to your mind when you hear of someone trying to be saved by grace and works of the law? Galatians 5:1-4.

“As the priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat, so Christ will place all these sins upon Satan, the originator and instigator of sin . . . Satan, bearing the guilt of all the sins which he has caused . . . will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked” (ibid., pp. 485, 486).

But God’s Word plainly states, “The Lord hath laid on Him (CHRIST) the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). CHRIST is the One who has been “made sin for us” (II Cor. 5:21). Since all of our sins were placed upon Christ, what need is there for any other sinbearer? This doctrine is blasphemy!

SOUL-SLEEP

Adventists teach that the unsaved will be annihilated and not spend eternity in the lake of fire as the Scriptures teach. Neither do they believe that a person has any consciousness after death. This belief is called “soul-sleep” and contradicts precious Scripture on behalf of the believers who have gone home to be with the Lord. See I Thess. 4:17; II Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:21, 23; Rev. 6:9, 10; and Psalm 116:15.

THE SABBATH

The unique issue among Adventists is their teaching that one must keep the Sabbath (Saturday) to be saved. This again is the issue: Are you saved by LAW or GRACE?

Any of the following Scriptures answer this, and you should learn to apply them to any issue such as this as you witness. Keeping the Sabbath or any other “work of the law” has nothing to do with salvation.

“Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him ALL THAT BELIEVE are justified from all things, from which YE COULD NOT be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38, 39).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith WITHOUT the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:20, 28).

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. AND THE LAW IS NOT OF FAITH . . .” (Gal. 3: 10-12) .

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath

concluded all under sin, that the PROMISE BY FAITH of Jesus Christ might be GIVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE” (Gal. 3 :21, 22).

If they want to keep the law to be saved, how much would they have to keep? They would have to keep the WHOLE law, because if they failed in just one point they would then be sinners, and have the results of sin—death (James 2:10; Rom. 6:23).

Christ asked a pointed question in John 7:19, “Did not Moses give you the law, and yet NONE of you keepeth the law?”

It is rather foolish to try to keep the law to be saved, or to try to keep the law after you are saved SO THAT you will stay saved. “Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:3)

Regarding the Sabbath, God says, “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Romans 14:5). God doesn’t give the power to the local church to tell you that you must observe a particular day above an other.

“Let no man (even Seventh-Day Adventist) therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or OF THE SABBATH . . .” (Col. 2: 16) .

Agree with them that Saturday is the Sabbath, the seventh day, because it is. The Sabbath has never been changed from the seventh day. But the day one chooses to worship God is not really the issue. You should worship the Lord EVERY day. How one is saved is the important point. Incidentally, the Sabbath was given as a day of REST, not as a day of WORSHIP. When the Adventists go to meetings on Saturday, they are DOING much more and TRAVELING much more than the laws governing the Sabbath allow!

If the Adventists followed the punishment Scripture attaches to disobedience of the Sabbath as prescribed by law, they would soon exterminate themselves. See Numbers 15: 32-36 and Exodus 35:2.

Christians worship on Sunday because the Apostles did, Acts 20:7; and the Apostles did because Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, Luke 24: 1.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR WITNESSING

(1) Be cautious of the subtle approach used by the Adventists to lure the unsuspecting public through their radio program, “The Voice of Prophecy,” and their telecast, “Faith for Today.” You can listen to or watch these programs without ever hearing of the false doctrine taught by the Seventh-Day Adventists. When you read their literature, the difference between their beliefs and the Bible is more obvious.

(2) At Christmas season a truck full of carolers may ride down your street. As they sing the beautiful songs of Christmas, nice, clean-looking young people will come to your door asking for contributions for missionary hospital work being carried on throughout the world. They are Seventh-Day Adventists, but you would never know it. They don’t tell you, and neither can you discover who printed the beautiful literature they leave with you . . . it doesn’t say. Sometimes way down on the bottom of a page in very small letters you might see three letters: SDA.

The Seventh-Day Adventists really do much good in maintaining hospitals and schools and promoting high morals. This is one reason people fail to see that it is a dangerous “religion.” They see the good works of their members and assume it must be a good religion. As a soul winner, remember the teaching of II Cor. 11: 13-15, that Satan’s ministers OFTEN promote “righteousness.” More people are “sucked into it” that way.

(3) The Southern Publishing Company in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Review and Herald Publishing Company in Washington, D.C., are their publishing houses. Southern puts out a ten-volume set called the Bible Story, especially for children, you should be aware of.

(4) When witnessing to an Adventist, remember that INDIVIDUAL members of the church may not believe everything taught by the group as a whole. Some, no doubt, know the Lord as their Saviour . . .

through God honoring a portion of the Word they perhaps have heard. You need to question each one to determine what he is trusting in to take him to heaven. Invariably you will find that you must go over SIMPLE verses on salvation, especially those that point out that salvation is purely by grace apart from any works or lawkeeping (Romans 4:5; 3:28; 11:6; Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3: 5) .

(5) The official teaching (and general belief among the members) is that you cannot be sure of salvation now, and that though you may be saved now, you might lose your salvation before you die. In other words, they do not believe the gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE (Rom. 6:23). You may have to go over this truth again and again before they see it. Refer to Chapter Two for more on eternal security.

(6) No matter how hard they try to turn the conversation from the gospel to the Sabbath, etc., you must keep the conversation on the gospel. The gospel is good news, especially to those people who have been under the burden of thinking they have to keep the law to be saved.

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:5, 6).

Please address any questions or comments to:

The Gracenet

info@gracenet.com

http://gracenet.com/



**For a printed bound copy,
please contact**

Rev. Wally Morillo

P.O. Box 775

Pharr, TX 78577