

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ~ MRS. ELLEN G. WHITE ~
CONTRADICTORY TEACHINGS ?

David C. Mills
May 02, 2000
born2serve.org

The Seventh Day Adventist trace their origin back to the early 1800's to William Miller. In 1860 the church adopted the name of Seventh-day Adventist, which underlies their belief that “the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) is given as a reminder of the God who both creates and saves, and is the day God invites all to come and worship him”¹. Mr. Miller promoted the idea that Christ was to return on October 22, 1844. On the day following the "Great Disappointment" of October 22, 1844, Mr. Hiram Edson claimed to have seen a vision. He said, “he saw Jesus standing at the altar of heaven” and concluded that Miller had been right about the time of Jesus’ coming, but wrong about the place. Shortly thereafter a man by the name of Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain and a convert to "Millerism" began to promote the idea that Jesus moved into a heavenly sanctuary, a new apartment in Heaven, on October 22, 1844. He published a pamphlet that greatly influenced James and Ellen White. It is these three who were the driving force behind the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) movement. In 1986 the SDA membership hit 5 million², and today the church claims to have over 8 million members’ worldwide.

In my study of this organization, it appears as though one of two things have happened. Either there has been a great misunderstanding of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine or they are unwilling to make a clear, concise statement as to their beliefs. At the least it has become apparent that they are inconsistent in their statements. Ironically enough, the SDA’s agree with me.³

In the book “The Kingdom of the Cults”, the author seems to make it a point to refute the majority of the concerns that a “bible believing” Christian may have. However, resources from

Christian Research Institute, Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry⁴, and others bring the same condemnation without refutation.

Due to the variation of views as to whether or not this organization is indeed a cult, I will focus on establishing that fact by using their own statements as posted on their Internet site.⁵

For reference purposes, I have included in the back of this report the following information:

- Appendix A – Their History Statement
- Appendix B – Mission Statement
- Appendix C - A Statement on the Holy Scriptures
- Appendix D – A Statement of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy
- Appendix E – A Statement of Tolerance
- Appendix F – A Statement on the Peace Message to All People of Good Will
- Appendix G – Their Views at a Glance
- Appendix H - Christian Research Institute, Affirmations , Denials & Aberrant

To begin with, I would like to take a look at their History Statement in Appendix A. As I read through, there are two very distinctive statements made, which I found disturbing. The first, in paragraph 4, was made as they attempted to clear up the false prophecy of Christ's return on October 22, 1844 made by William Miller. They make the statement that "indeed" the date had

been correct, however “the wrong event” for that day was predicted. They go on to say that Jesus “would begin at that time a special ministry in heaven for His followers”. The SDA’s and Ellen G. White are not strangers to false prophecy; this was simply the beginning, as you will see.

Also, in paragraph 6 it is very clear as to their view of Ellen G. White. They state that she became and “remains the trusted spiritual counselor”, and she also “enjoyed God’s special guidance”. This was, and apparently still is, their view of Mrs. White as confirmed by John J. Robertson as he wrote in his book, *The White Truth*. In an effort to combat the recent discovery of Mrs. White’s plagiarism, he wrote "The influence of the spirit of prophecy is woven into the warp and woof of Adventist faith, life and organization. . . What we are as a church is a reflection of our faith in the divine authority evident in the writings of Ellen G. White." ⁶

Additionally, Mrs. White claimed that future events were revealed to her. "As the Spirit of God has opened to my mind the great truths of His word, and the scenes of the past and the future, I have been bidden to make known to others that which has thus been revealed."⁷ She had also made it very clear that she regarded herself as a “messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people”. She continues, “My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but does not end there”.⁸

Mr. Robertson and Mrs. White seem to agree in this area and their beliefs still stand unchanged according to their current History Statement. Unfortunately, as I stated earlier, Mrs. White has attempted to predict many things during her ministry that never seemed to prove true. For example Mrs. White prophesied that:

- Jerusalem's Future: Mrs. White will be alive when Jesus returns⁹
- England will attack the United States (1862)¹⁰
- The Civil War is a sign Jesus is about to return¹¹
- In 1850's Mrs. White said Jesus will return "in a few months"¹²
- Adventists living in 1856 will be alive when Jesus returns¹³
- Mrs. White saw Enoch on Jupiter or Saturn¹⁴

Many of these same principles sound somewhat similar to that of other cultic organizations.

This, in combination with the church's claims that the writings of Mrs. White are inspired commentary on the Bible, are not of human origin, have doctrinal authority, and are unquestionable, pose a very serious problem for the SDA's.

We could very easily overlook the next section in Appendix B, their Mission Statement.

However with close examination, I will take a look at two points that are made. Both, I believe relate to each other. In the opening statement, they state that their mission is to "proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' message in Revelation 14:6-12".

If we take a look at Revelations 14:12 it reads, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Mrs. White, their spiritual guide, has made the following statement, "Too late they see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God".¹⁵ We can see here that Mrs. White is clearly leaning towards a "faith plus works" view. Secondly, in their first point in Appendix B, labeled

“Preaching”, they make reference to “the authority of His Ten Commandments law with its reminder of the seventh-day Sabbath”. It appears to me, that the SDA’s themselves reinforce our interpretation of Mrs. White’s faith plus works doctrine. I believe that to them, this passage takes on a whole different meaning. Mrs. White has also stated that “At the time appointed for the judgment All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged "out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."¹⁶ I’d like to suggest that Mrs. White and the SDA’s knew exactly what they believed. Although Mrs. White has been known to sound very evangelical and affirm a belief of some kind in salvation by grace, it has is also documented that she taught semi-pelagianism. This is the teaching that salvation is partly by grace and partly by works. This is also the doctrine of salvation taught by the Roman Catholic Church. On April 9, 1893, Mrs. White wrote a letter to a man by the name A. T. Jones, in an effort to correct his teaching that salvation was by grace through faith alone. In that letter she stated that “all your good works cannot save you; but it is nevertheless impossible for you to be saved without good works.¹⁷ In Romans 3:28, God’s word tells us, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” I’ll believe the Bible.

As I read over Appendix C, A Statement of the Holy Scriptures, I could honestly find no fault with any statements made in this section.

Next, I would like to take a look at Appendix D, their Statement of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy. Simply by its title and the first paragraph statement we can clearly see inconsistency in that they do not believe that the “Biblical Canon” as they stated in paragraph 6, has truly been

closed. This can also be seen by some of the statements made by Mrs. White, which added to the scriptures, such as:

- Satan was offered a pardon in heaven¹⁸
- Eve wandered from Adam's side¹⁹
- Angels communicated with Adam after the Fall²⁰
- Some races are a mixture of man and beast²¹
- It takes seven days to get to heaven²²
- Adam was crowned king of Eden²³
- Angels would have died for man²⁴
- Adam kept the Sabbath²⁵
- Jesus died for angels²⁶
- Angels have golden access cards²⁷

I would like to spend some time looking at paragraph 2 in this section. They refer to Revelation chapter 12, and identify that John here is speaking of SDA Church as being the “remnant” church in the last days. They go on to state that they “believe that in this brief prophetic picture the Revelator is describing the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which not only keeps "the commandments of God" but has "the testimony of Jesus Christ," which is "the spirit of prophecy"”. Among other things, one idea that appears prominent is that they believe that they alone, like many cultic groups, have the way to salvation. Mrs. White writes, “I saw that as the

Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these messages [of the Investigative Judgment], and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy, and they cannot be benefited [sic] by the intercession of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left; and Satan, pleased with the deception, assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself.”²⁸

In their recommendations at the end of this section, recommendation number 1 states “That as a church we seek the power of the Holy Spirit to apply to our lives more fully the inspired counsel contained in the writings of Ellen G. White”. I would think that if Mrs. White’s writings were not an authoritative work that superceded the Bible, that they would seek the counsel of Mrs. White’s writings, to apply more fully the Holy Scriptures. Of course it is at least clear that they believe Mrs. White’s writings are at least of equal value as the Bible. They state that ”While men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture on sacred, holy ground, and had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired. The Testimonies [Mrs. White’s writings] have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this.”²⁹

The final point I would like to address is contained in Appendix F, Views at a Glance. In the “Life after Death and the Future” section they make the statement that, “Adventists follow Jesus in identifying those who die as sleeping. Those who have trusted God are raised to life when Jesus returns, and look forward to a wonderful future--eternal life in God’s presence.”

In 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 we read, “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

There are a host of problems with what this group teaches. I have attempted to address the obvious that lied within their own statements, which are in the public’s eye. Below is a list of doctrines, some that we have discussed and more that we haven’t, that pose serious problems for this group.³⁰

- Our sins will ultimately be placed on Satan
- Jesus is Michael the Archangel³¹
- Worship must be done on Saturday (the Sabbath).
- On October 22, 1844 Jesus entered the second and last phase of his atoning work.
- Investigative Judgment
- The dead do not exist anymore -- soul sleep.
- The wicked are annihilated – no hell.
- Ellen G. White, the "founder" of Seventh Day Adventism, was a messenger from God gifted with the spirit of prophecy.
- There is a sanctuary in heaven where Jesus carries out his mediatorial work.

I believe that the SDA’s have an unbiblical doctrine of Christ. They have stated that, “It was seen, also, that while the sin offering pointed to Christ as a sacrifice, and the high priest

represented Christ as a mediator, the scapegoat typified Satan, the author of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed.”³² I am only to believe that they do not feel that Christ was the propitiation for our sins. However, 1 John 2:2 is very clear as it reads, “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” Mrs. White, their spiritual guide, said: We are saved through grace plus works, however, the Bible says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9" And finally, the SDA's believe that “Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator.”³³ The Bible is very clear that “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”, 1 Timothy 2:5.

Secondly, it appears to me thus far that they believe that those who do not worship on the Sabbath are not keeping the commands of God, and thus not a member of the saints. Martin would not agree with me, as he has made clear by his views³⁴, however, it seems to me during my studies that they believe that they have a least “a corner on the market” of salvation, as discussed earlier.

In the “Dallas Statement” it was stated by the SDA's that, "One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth and provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction."³⁵ Although they stated in Statement 17 of the Dallas Statement, “that the Bible is

the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested", it has not convinced me that they truly believe that. How can a "continuing of the truth" be tested? Mr. Martin has made the statement that Mrs. White was a "True Christian"³⁶, and was not a false prophet. He even refutes her false prophesy as, false statements and even sinful, but not a biblical false prophet.

In closing, I must disagree with Mr. Martin and Mr. Hanegraff. As I began this study, I viewed the Seventh-day Adventist as a modern apostate church. However, my conclusion thus far leads me to believe that they are, in fact, a cult, and that Mrs. Ellen G. White was indeed a false prophet. Matthew 7:15-18 says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." At a minimum Mrs. White has made false predictions, contradicted the Bible, added to the Holy Scriptures, lied, cheated and stolen. I have to believe that's more than just sinful. A prophet needs only one false prophecy to be disqualified. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 gives us the rule by which we are to judge prophets, as it states, "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."

It is interesting to note that in the August 14, 1883 Review & Herald, the following statement appears: "Our position on the Testimonies [of Mrs. Ellen G. White] is like the keystone to the arch. Take that out, and there is no logical stopping place till all the special truths of the message are gone. . . . Nothing is surer than this, that this message and the visions belong together and stand or fall together."³⁷ Yes, they stand and fall together, the SDA's and Mrs. White. This group has caught my attention and I will continue to research their doctrine.

¹ www.Adventist.com, *Views at a Glance*

² Jordan, Anne Devereaux, *The Seventh Day Adventists: A History*, 1988.

³ Martin, Walter, *Kingdom of the Cults*, 584

⁴ www.Carm.org, Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry Home Page

⁵ www.Aventist.org, Seventh-day Adventist Home Page

⁶ Robertson, John J., *The White Truth*, 1981

⁷ White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy*, p. xi, <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/gc/gc.asp>

⁸ White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages*, Book One, p36

⁹ White, Ellen G., *Early Writings*, p. 75, pp.15-16

¹⁰ White, Ellen G., *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1*, p. 259

¹¹ White, Ellen G., *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1*, p. 260

¹² White, Ellen G., *Early Writings*, p. 67

¹³ White, Ellen G., *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1*, pp. 131-132

¹⁴ White, Ellen G., *A Word to the "Little Flock,"* p. 22

¹⁵ White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy*, p. 640, <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/gc/gc.asp>

¹⁶ White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy*, p. 486, <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/gc/gc.asp>

¹⁷ White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages, Bk. 3*, p. 147

¹⁸ White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy*, pp. 495-496, <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/gc/gc.asp>

¹⁹ White, Ellen G., *Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3*, pp. 39, 40, 42

²⁰ White, Ellen G., *Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3*, p. 52

²¹ White, Ellen G., *Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 4*, p. 75

²² White, Ellen G., *Early Writings*, p. 16

²³ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Vol. 7a*, p. 1082

²⁴ White, Ellen G., *Early Writings*, p. 127

²⁵ White, Ellen G., *Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3*, p. 52

²⁶ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 758

²⁷ White, Ellen G., *Early Writings*, p. 39

²⁸ White, Ellen G., *Early Writings*, p. 261

²⁹ White, Ellen G., *Selected Messages, Bk. 1*, p. 23

³⁰ www.CRI.org, Appendix H - Christian Research Institute, Affirmations, Denials & Aberrant

³¹ White, Ellen G., *Early Writings*, p. 164 – *Spiritual Gifts, Vol.2*, p.276

³² White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy*, p. 422, <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/gc/gc.asp>

³³ White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy*, p. 425, <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/gc/gc.asp>

³⁴ Martin, Walter, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, p.580

³⁵ *Dallas Statement*, 1981

³⁶ Martin, Walter, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, p.554

³⁷ www.Carm.org