

**SOME GREAT CONNEXIONS:
OUR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HERITAGE
FROM THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

Presented by

Bert Haloviak

General Conference Archives

May 1994

Introduction: Rationale for this Study

I believe a study of the Christian Connection movement, the first indigenous American religious movement, helps clarify what many call "historic Adventism," the Adventism that existed from 1844 to 1888 and beyond. The study offers inspiring insight about the Christian heritage of the movement that became the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The term "connection" roughly translates into "church" or "movement."

There is a direct linkage from the Christian Connection church or Christians, as they called themselves, to the Seventh-day Adventist church in the following central areas:

1. Organizational structure--Early SDA congregational focus, suspicion of any structure beyond the local church and thus role of conference structure and even General Conference was "advisory" rather than executive. Christ, alone, was the Head of the church. Since the Bible and Bible alone was the basis for all, there was suspicion of non-Scriptural names and organization. A strong opposition to creeds.

2. Social attitudes--Strong antislavery sentiments, heritage of religious freedom, strong orientation toward temperance and health reform, manual labor, major role for women within the church.

3. Theology--Character as the sole test of fellowship [as in early Adventism], no creed but the Bible, opposition to trinitarian beliefs, Holy Spirit as an "essence" rather than member of the Godhead, arian in its view of Christ, major focus upon sanctification, opposition to imputationist and substitutionary views of atonement, strong focus upon importance of obedience to God's law.

In this presentation, I expect to show a direct linkage in these three crucial areas.

The Washington, New Hampshire, Connection

The Seventh-day Adventist church, in a certain sense, was born in Washington, NH. We thus claim a strong heritage of religious and political freedom. You can't get much more patriotic than to claim roots from Washington, NH.

It was the first town in America to name itself after George Washington and it took that name in 1776, the year of the American Revolution.

The town is especially important to Seventh-day Adventists because it is the first known place where the seventh-day Sabbath and the Advent united.

You know the story of Rachel Oakes, a Seventh-day Baptist convincing Frederick Wheeler, minister of the church in Washington, NH, about the seventh-day Sabbath. Then other members of that church accepted it and became the first SDA church. Leroy Froom called this "the cradle of the seventh-day Sabbath among the body that, in 1860, took the name Seventh-day Adventists."

BUT did you know that the original church where all this took place was a Christian Connection church? It was built by the members of the Christian Connection faith in the early 1840s.

In 1843, Joseph Bates, a Christian Connection minister, who accepted the Millerite position that Christ was soon to return, went to that Washington, NH, Christian church and he and Adventist Joshua Goodwin convinced the members of the soon return of Christ.

That made the Washington, NH, Christian church one of hundreds of New England Christian Connection churches that accepted the Adventist position.

After Bates accepted the Sabbath in 1845, he went back to that congregation and, with them, solidified the seventh-day Sabbath position.

Thus in a former Christian Connection church were the "Advent" and the seventh-day Sabbath combined.

Bates went on to develop a rationale for the Sabbath based upon the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 that would have major implications for sanctuary theology.

Some of the members of that church who would become prominent in the SDA church were Farnsworth, Mead, Russell, and Ball. Even Uriah Smith was converted in that church.

So from Washington, NH, SDAs received a heritage of "freedom," an openness toward accepting neglected truths that are clearly defended from the Scriptures and even a willingness to accept the insights of a woman in receiving truth.

One other element was present: tolerance.

Thomas Preble, whose tract on the Sabbath convinced Bates, was a Freewill Baptist.

Frederick Wheeler, who occasionally visited the Washington, NH, church as a circuit pastor, was a Methodist minister.

Rachel Oakes was a Seventh-Day Baptist.

The Washington, NH, church itself was Christian Connection.

And then it became the first SDA church.

So you have real diversity, but a unity over the central issues. At least five different religious faiths thus formed the initial SDA church.

What about these Christian Connection people? Why is so little known about them?

A Brief History of the Christian Connection

Here's a summary of the founders of the movement by Milo T Morrill, historian of the Christian Connection, writing in 1908:

Founders of the Christian Movement: "These seven men were leaders, in different sections of the country, of that movement which crystallized into the Christian Church of America. [James] O'Kelly was the strong, impetuous leader, the advocate of religious liberty and antagonist of ecclesiastical tyranny; [Virginia--Southern Christians--opposition to Methodist bishop control--thus an organizational question--sprang from Methodism] [Rice] Haggard was the well-poised, discerning man ready with a matured plan of action; [no name but Christian, no creed but the Bible]; [Elias] Smith was the fearless iconoclast, the brilliant, rash, but unstable reformer and journalist, to whom the shock of conflict was but an added spur [former Freewill Baptist, established first religious newspaper in America, devoted to religious liberty, New England Christians, had entire Bible memorized]; [Abner] Jones was the methodical ground-gainer, reaching conclusions slowly, holding them tenaciously [first to

establish Christian churches in New England]; [Barton] Stone was the scholarly theorist and lover of harmony, the mediating apologist [former Presbyterian, well-trained theologian]; while [Levi] Purviance was the rugged, logical man of affairs, with the grasp of a statesman [pastoral]; [William] Kinkade was the theologian of this group, sweeping men to conviction by force of fact and argument [wrote his book The Bible Doctrine, using Greek and Hebrew meanings entirely without lexicons because he was traveling, often quoted by James White after White was a SDA].

"Seven great men were these, if measured by the place they filled in America's early religious history. Mankind owes them a debt never discharged, because by a train of circumstances their sun was obscured....We do not dub them founders of a denomination, because they did not truly found one; but they started a movement and led it toward separate denominational life." [Morrill 64-65]

The Christians developed spontaneously in three separate areas within the United States at about the same time, without any group knowing about the others.

The movement owes its theological underpinnings to a reaction against what church historian Nathan Hatch calls "the passive quality of Calvinist religious experience." Calvinism, with its predestinarian focus, demanded very specific evidences that the Holy Spirit had come upon the candidate in a very real way. The process often took years and sometimes never, so the believer had no real assurance of acceptance with God.

In contrast, Christians considered conversion as "finding gospel liberty." They preached that the individual could exercise faith at any time.

By 1860, when Seventh-day Adventists had less than 3,000 believers, the Christian Church had over 200,000 believers, the fifth largest Protestant body in the United States. [Hatch, 71. He counts the combined Christians and Disciples]

In 1892 Christians had 118,229 believers. SDAs had 33,778.

In 1906 Christians ranked sixteenth in numerical strength among religious bodies in the United States with 110,117 members.

SDAs had an equivalent number by 1912.

We thus see that the Christians were declining while the Seventh-day Adventist were increasing.

What about the political setting in which the Christian denomination originated.

Political Freedom

Here was a movement born on the 4th of July. It is also America's first indigenous religion--born of a "tradition of independence"

Such a movement "challenged common people to take religious destiny into their own hands, to think for themselves, to oppose centralized authority and the elevation of the clergy as a separate order of men. These religious communities could embrace the forlorn and the uprooted far more intensely than any political movement and offer them powerful bonds of acceptance and hope....American camp meetings became 'festivals of democracy,'" says religious historian Nathan Hatch. [Hatch 58]

Many of the Christian leaders fought in the American Revolution. It was inevitable that the aftermath of the American Revolution, with its perspective of political freedom, should impact upon views of religious freedom.

Religious Freedom

When the "Christians" thought about religious freedom, they considered that it meant far more than the separation of church and state.

Hatch 76: Elias Smith "contrasted the mere separation of church and state with 'being wholly free to examine for ourselves, what is truth.' He argued that every last Christian had the 'unalienable right' to follow 'the scripture wherever it leads him, even an equal right with the Bishops and Pastors of the churches...even though his principles may, in many things, be contrary to what the Reverend D.D.'s call Orthodoxy.'"

Jones 174-75: "Another trait of character which shone conspicuously to all beholders, was [Jones'] truly Christian charity. He was exceedingly tenacious of his own views of religious truth, but he was perfectly willing to give every man the utmost freedom of thought and expression."

Christians were very tolerant concerning individual theological positions because they had such complete confidence in the teachings of the Scriptures.

Elias Smith, in 1808, began publishing The Herald of Gospel Liberty. This was the first religious newspaper in the world. Because the Christians refused to register such an institution with the state, Smith held the newspaper in his own name. It became the general church paper of Christians and helped unify the movement in the various parts of the country.

Besides the obvious similarities with the future Seventh-day Adventists in the matter of religious freedom, the Christians would exhibit an amazing affinity relative to social freedom.

Social Freedom

Antislavery--"From the denomination's inception its leaders spoke out against slavery. James O'Kelly wrote a pamphlet opposing ownership of human beings. Barton W Stone abjured it and influenced relatives to liberate their slaves; David Purviance did not keep slaves or employ slave help, because he believed human rights forbade men to make chattels of their fellows; William Kinkade was second to no man in Illinois in securing a state constitution forever banning slavery." [Morrill 362]

As early as 1867, Christians had established at least one all-black conference in North Carolina.

Temperance--"From the first the Christians have been temperance reformers. No denominational ministry in America has more consistently fought the liquor traffic and intemperance." [Morrill 362]

By 1816 Abner Jones, founder of the New England Christians, had adopted total abstinence. And we all know that Joseph Bates of the Christian Connection established the first temperance society in America in the 1820s.

In 1820 he wrote this "Temperance Song":

"O, who would drink consuming fire
To gratify a foul desire.
Its promises are smooth and fair
Relief from pain and anxious care.

Deceitful, momentary ease!
Though for the present it doth please,
Yet in the end, worse of all foes,
T'will fill our bitter cut with woes.

It paints our face with fiery red,
Intoxicates and fools the head,
It palsies every active limb,
Makes mad and crazy, weak and slim...

Come, break at once the fatal chain
That binds thee to that deathly train.
Cast off thy shackles--be a man
Once more, while yet you can."

Health and Medicine--Samuel Thompson, an uneducated practitioner of natural remedies who learned his botanic medicine in rural New Hampshire at the close of the 18th century, teamed up with the Christian Connection preacher Elias Smith to publish his experience with botanic family medicine. Both championed the idea that Americans must throw off the oppressive yoke of clergymen, lawyers, and physicians. Common people were to break the stranglehold of the medical profession and resist such treatments as bleeding and blistering and such drugs as mercury and opium. [Hatch 28-9]

Equality of Women--"The Christians were first in modern times to ordain women to the gospel ministry. Mrs Melissa Terrell was formally ordained in 1866. But as early as 1812 women preachers were working and highly esteemed among the Christians." [Morrill 363]

"Mrs Abigail Roberts, of New York, and Rev H Lizzie Haley, of Massachusetts, were very remarkable evangelists in their time in the East; and competent judges regard Miss Haley as the best evangelist they have ever known." [ibid]

Nancy Cram was a famous Christian minister in New York state between 1812-16. While she was a Freewill Baptist she embraced the beliefs of the Christian denomination. Seven of her converts eventually became Christian ministers.

By the beginning of the 20th century, over 40 Christian Connection women had been ordained as gospel ministers.

There is a clear carryover here into the Seventh-day Adventist church where nineteenth-century women held many more positions within the official ministry then than they do today.

Antioch College--Established in 1850 was the first college in America to grant full equality in all courses to both men and women. [Oberlin allowed women to take those courses 'as shall best suit their sex and prospective employment.']

Here's how one of the Christian writers, writing in 1925, describes the role of women in the Christian church:

"Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, the first college founded by the Christians was the first to give women equality in all matters, courses, diplomas, graduation, faculty positions. Horace Mann, Antioch's first president, was a member of the Christian Church and made a large contribution to the educational system of America. The Christian Church was the first in modern times to ordain women and place them on equality with men in pulpit, in conferences, conventions, and all Christian gatherings. They

have always had equal privileges in voting in the churches, conferences, etc." [Bennett, The Christian Denomination and Christian Doctrine]

Organizational Freedom

Principles of Christian Church in 1794 and remaining to 1910:

"1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church.

"2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.

"3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament our only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

"4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of church fellowship and membership.

"5. The right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all." [MacClenny 121-22]

Acceptance of a Name--Christians were fond of telling this legend of John Wesley: "It is related that once John Wesley, in the visions of the night, found himself, as he thought, at the gates of hell. He knocked and asked who were within. 'Are there any Roman Catholics here?' he asked. 'Yes,' was the answer, 'a great many.' 'Any Church of England men?' 'Yes, a great many.' 'Any independents?' 'Yes, a great many.' 'Any Presbyterians?' 'Yes, a great many.' 'Any Baptists?' 'Yes, a great many.' 'Any Wesleyans?' 'Yes, a great many.' Disappointed and dismayed, especially at the last reply, he turned his steps upward, and found himself at the gates of paradise, and here he repeated the same questions. 'Any Wesleyans here?' 'No.' 'Any Presbyterians?' 'No.' 'Any Church of England men?' 'No.' 'Any Roman Catholics?' 'No.' 'Whom have you here, then?' he asked in astonishment? 'We know nothing here,' was the reply, 'of any of those names you have mentioned. The only name of which we know anything here is 'Christian.' We are all Christians here, and of these we have a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues." [In Barrett, The Centennial of Religious Journalism, 20-21]

Christian-Free Will Baptist Affinity and Name Heritage--Church of God--"The Free Will Baptists arose contemporaneously with the Christians in New England and stood for almost the same things. As early as 1818 they were making overtures toward union with the Christians in Northern New England. In 1820 a joint conference was called at Covington, New York. An agreement was reached by which the united body should be called 'The Church of God.' [Early SDAs and church of God] They agreed to exchange

pulpits and ministers and to labor in harmony, but nothing came of the conference. In 1823 Mark Fernald was sent as a messenger of the United States Christian General Conference to attend the Free Will Baptist annual meeting to inquire if the Free Will Baptists would cooperate in ordinations, baptisms, and the communion. He did not receive an affirmative answer from the majority and the negotiations ceased." [Harper, The Genius of the Christian Church, 41]

Christians and the Pragmatic Need for Conference Structure--

There was considerable debate within the Christian Connection in the early years of the nineteenth century over the need for any organizational entity beyond that of the local church. Here's how Christian historian Milo Morrill described the issue:

"Organized delegated conferences were regarded askance by many who feared loss of independence for individuals and churches. Some older men vigorously expressed fears that dearly bought liberty was about to be forfeited. But safeguarding the ministry and churches outweighed all fears, and Christian conferences have been multiplying for nearly one hundred years.

"The conference was regarded as a voluntary association. No minister or church was compelled to join, and some ministers and churches probably never did join. Whatever authority conference possessed was delegated by units composing conference--ministers in good standing, churches in good standing represented by their delegates. Members were careful not to compromise their own liberty or their churches' independence. Hence conference might discuss, admonish, advise, urge, but could not demand or legislate. True, some resolutions passed at annual sessions seemed preemptory, but they fell harmless. These early organizations were, therefore, merely voluntary modes of co-operation."

A similar view toward the conference and General Conference structure prevailed throughout the nineteenth century SDA Church.

Burning the Minutes--Here's additional evidence to indicate how opposed to creedalism the Christian Connection believers were:

"The sectarian literature, which the more conservative [Christians] had seen, so prejudiced them that they refused, for several years, to even have their minutes printed...Hence the scarcity of data for the historian. Sometimes when a General Meeting was held the last thing done was to read and approve the minutes of the session, and then burn them, so they would not have any precedent for the

next General Meeting."

The future Seventh-day Adventist church closely paralleled the Christian Connection, not only in its position on name, conference and general conference structure, but in its use of terms for church officials [elders, deacons], method of organizing churches, the simple church covenant and the authority of the local church over admittance and disfellowshipping of its members. Christians as did Seventh-day Adventists considered character the test of fellowship and relied completely upon the methodology outlined by Christ in Matt 18:15-18 for church discipline.

As significant as the carryover into the "historic" Seventh-day Adventist church is in the areas of social and organizational issues, it is even more significant in the theological realm.

Doctrinal Freedom and Beliefs

Christian Connection to Adventist to Seventh-day Adventist to Justification by Faith Seventh-day Adventist--Consider the implications of the position of "no creed but the Bible" and how such a position almost inevitably led Christians eventually into the Seventh-day Adventist faith. Here is the spiritual pilgrimage:

1. No creed but the Bible. Some Christians practiced footwashing and tithing in the 1820s.

2. Thousands became Adventists since the Millerites were so immersed in the Scriptures that they could convince Christians that the Scriptures pointed to the literal, visible return of Christ. Those Adventist Christians thus moved from a postmillennial to a premillennial position and looked for perfection above, not upon the earth.

3. As they continued that upward focus beyond Oct of 1844, they received "light" that was shining from the most holy place where they saw the ark and the relevance of the Biblical Sabbath.

Amazingly: an entire church of Christians in New York State accepted the Sabbath position as early as 1820.

4. As this group continued its pilgrimage, it received even greater light from the most holy place and began to more fully understand God's mercy as well as His law.

James White completed this entire pilgrimage and although he died in 1881, during his last year of life, he had made the transition to a post-1888 view of salvation.

But it all started with the position "no creed but the Bible." Here's how seriously the Christian Connection took that phrase:

At the Christian General Conference, Marion, NY, Oct 2, 1850--"Under head of 'Sentiments of the Christian Connection' was adopted the following: 'Your Committee on the Sentiments of the Christian Connection beg leave to present the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing in full the sentiments of the Christian denomination, and respectfully submit them to the consideration of the Convention.' The Committee went upon the convention floor carrying a large Bible in view of the gathering. Great enthusiasm was evoked." [EGW and large Bible imagery. Morrill 190]

Christian "Rules and Regulations--Here is a listing of "Rules and Regulations Divine," written by James O'Kelly, founder of the Southern Christian Connection in the 1820s. Notice how many of them carry over into early Seventh-day Adventism:

1. As members of one body, Christ is the center of union, as also the head, from whom all receive nourishment. Love to Him is the term of communion: 'If any man love not Jehovah, Jesus Christ, let him be expelled,' 1 Cor last chapter, 22 verse.

2. Marks of love to Jesus Christ must be judged by our willing obedience to his commands. 'If ye love me keep my commandments.'

3. If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one do not eat. 1 Cor 5:11. [Character is the test of fellowship as in early Adventism. Emphasis in orig]

4. If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him. 2 Thess 3:14. If a man sin [publicly] rebuke him before all. Paul. [Importance of obedience to the Word]

5. If a brother walk disorderly in thy sight, or trespass against thee, follow the divine rule laid down in Matt 18:15, etc. But, if thy brother repent, 'thou shalt forgive him.' Luke 17:3,4; 2 Cor 2:6, etc. [Matt 18 methodology in church fellowship matters, as in early Adventism]

6. If disputes arise among the brethren respecting

temporal matters, and they can not settle it themselves to their satisfaction, they have a plain rule. 1 Cor 6:1. You need be at no loss for divine rules of discipline. [Take disputes to God's community, avoid law courts, as followed in early Adventism]

7. See the equality in the 'Christian Church.' Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low. James 1:9,10.

8. With regard to clothing; I read that gold rings, gaudy raiment, things very rich, and costly, things naughty and superfluous, with a fashionable conformity to a vain world, are expressly forbidden. Moderation is right.

9. A little wine is lawful, and necessary in several cases. Paul. Strong drink in cases of necessity, said Solomon. But the general rule is, 'Whether you eat, or drink, etc, do all to the glory of God.' [Early SDAs and wine for medicinal purposes]

10. Again, 'Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good; think on these things.' Phil 4:8.

11. Marriage is honorable. Heb 13:4, but Christians ought to marry in the Lord, and not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

12. God's house is the house of prayer for all nations, saith the prophet. Yet the Church has rules to know ministers by. See Matt 7:16; 2 John; Isaiah 8:20. [Early SDAs and ministerial credentials, testing the ministry, credentials and licenses, etc]

13. SDA exception here: With regard to the equality and unity of ministers, traveling and settled, as workers in all churches, in the days of truth--I am able to draw forth a cloud of witnesses; but seeing they are to be found in Acts, and the epistles of the apostles, why should I write them? 'Search the Scriptures.' [Christians maintained both settled and traveling pastorates. SDAs did not develop a stationary pastorate until the 1920s.]

14. The churches are directed to esteem and support their ministers (who need) and especially those who labor (as an ox) and rule well, giving their whole time to the business. [SDAs and ministerial finance 1859--"Bible plan"]

15. The way of partial chosen pastors, one for Paul and one for Apollos, is the way to exalt some ministers, and debase others. It appears so unequal, that I can not think

it is divine. All are yours--whether Paul or Apollos, etc.

16. To conclude, let us who fear the Lord, forsake not our select meetings; whilst the following texts remain in the Bible: Malachi 3:16, James 5:16. Hebrews 10:25. 'Be ready to give an answer of the reason of your hope.' 1 Peter 3:15. Exhort one another, edify one another. Come ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul. David. See 1 Cor 14. Occasionally an unbeliever might be let into these meetings, and be convinced of all, and report that God is there.

17. 'Know the state of thy flock.' Solomon. That leading men were in the church, besides ministers, read Acts 15:22. That the church is the free woman, read Gal 5:1; 1 Cor 5; Matt 18, Acts 15. 'Stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ hath made thee free.' Amen. [Wilbur E MacClenny, Life of Rev James O'Kelly and Early History of the Christian Church, 1910]

Presbyterian Listing of Christian Connection "Errors"--In 1815, Presbyterian theologian Gilbert McMaster challenged what he considered the following Christian Connection errors:

1. That the doctrine of the Trinity is a fable. [Almost all Christians denied trinitarian teachings. First the term was a nonscriptural term and secondly, Christ was a created being.]

2. That Jesus Christ is no more than a man. [The Bible calls Christ the Son of God]

3. That the Holy Spirit is only an influence, or operation. [Christians opposed views of the personality of the Holy Spirit, considering it to be a "divine essence proceeding from God"]

4. That the soul is mortal. [Christians and conditional immortality]

5. That Adam's fall, original sin, the covenant of grace, the incarnation of Christ, are fables. [Christian's stressed character development, not a fallen nature]

6. That the death of Christ was not intended to reconcile God to man--that he suffered only as an example. [Christians, in general, denied substitutionary, imputationist views of the atonement]

7. That the wicked shall be annihilated. [They did not believe that the lost burned for ever and ever]

8. That females have a right to be public teachers of religion, etc. [Christians licensed and ordained women as ministers]

It seems apparent that the antitrinitarian and arian views of Christ and the Holy Spirit carried over into the early Seventh-day Adventist church. So also did views of the atonement.

Christian Views of Atonement--The Christians strongly emphasized imparted, but not imputed righteousness.

Here is what the son of Abner Jones, founder of the Christian Connection in the North, said about his father:

"He rejected the doctrine of expiatory atonement; and believed God to need no such expiation. Yet he believed in the special efficacy of Christ's death, and that no one could have been saved without the shedding of his blood. That the goodness of Christ was in some way imparted to the penitent sinner, and that it was not the penitence or reformation, but the death of Christ that saved the soul."
[A D Jones, Memoir of Elder Abner Jones, by His Son, A D Jones]

Barton Stone, founder of the Western Christian movement likewise denied concepts of the "imputed righteousness of Christ" which expression was not found in the Scriptures. He focused more upon a moral influence view of atonement and denied substitution.

Here is Christian Connection historian J R Freese statement on the atonement. It is one with which most pre-1888 Seventh-day Adventists would harmonize:

"The Christian connection, generally, reject the popular theology that teaches that 'Christ died to reconcile his Father to us.'...The true doctrine, as conceived by the Christian is, that Christ's death 'placed the world in salvable [word salvable is emphasized in orig] ground, while it releases us from no obligation of obedience, and annuls no threatening of damnation denounced against the obdurate. This view of the subject leaves justice with God, free moral agency with man, and faith and good works, with the grace of God, as the only means, whereby to secure eternal life.'"
[Freese, A History and Advocacy of the Christian Church, 68-69]

A major portion of the book by Christian Connection theologian, William Kinkade, denies substitutionary, imputationist views of the atonement. James White was clearly familiar with this study since he quoted from it in the Review on

the issue of the trinity. Here are just a few links to pre-1888 SDA views:

218: "God did not authorize Moses to tell the Jews that his favor would be confessed on them in consequence of the righteousness of Christ, but he told him to inform them that it depended entirely on their own obedience....

Enoch was translated for being righteous. (Gen 5:24).
Noah was saved because he was righteous....

God blesses his people because they are obedient and holy, and not because some other person is obedient and holy instead of them. [emphasis mine.]

This theological system clearly carried over into the early Seventh-day Adventist church. Here's one last statement from Kinkade:

246-47: "When God changes a sinner, and writes his law on his heart, and makes him love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, every attribute of the divine Being harmonizes in his pardon and salvation. Justice is satisfied, because the man is made just, and renders to God and man the service that justice requires of him. [emphasis mine]

So besides an organizational and social heritage from the Christian Connection there is likewise a theological. Here's one additional piece of evidence about that heritage:

"During the year 1815, a church was planted in Greenfield, Saratoga county, [NY State] by Elder D Farnum...Not far from the same period, a church was gathered in Plainfield, Otsego county, by Elder Willet Stillman. [f/"Memoirs of Deceased Christian Ministers," by E W Humphreys, p 345: "Willet Stillman. (1776-1826) --Elder Stillman was born in 1776. He was pastor of the church at Plainfield, NY, for some time, and died there, of lung disease, Nov 16, 1826. Sermon by Elder J Hayward, his intimate friend and fellow-laborer."] Brother Stillman held to the seventh day sabbath, and that church observed that day." [J R Freese, History and Advocacy of the Christian Church]

From Christian Connection to Adventist to Seventh-day Adventist

Step 1: Christian to Adventist--Christian Connection historian Milo Morrill makes this observation about the Christian-Adventist linkage:

"Mention should be made of the numerical loss to the Christians through the Adventists, during this period...Miller's followers increased with remarkable rapidity throughout New England, and in eastern New York, in parts of Pennsylvania, and in New Jersey, and other parts of the country....

"A perusal of the denominational literature shows that the Christians felt the Millerite furor in the sections of the country mentioned. Some of the leading ministers, and the editors of the periodicals, exposed the fallacy of Miller's reasoning; but they did not succeed in heading off a considerable stampede among their brethren. Most denominations closed their church buildings against the Millerites; but mindful of their own experience, the Christians opened their churches to advocates of the second advent doctrine. [Thus Himes' success in gaining Miller access to the cities] In an incredibly short time many ministers among the Christians were swept off their feet by Miller's views concerning prophecy, and began to preach his and their own vagaries. During the forties this propaganda continued unabated, with the result that the Christians lost a good many ministers, who, in their getting 'out of Babylon,' took church after church with them. Perhaps the Vermont conferences met with the greatest loss. Early conference records preserve the names of about one hundred churches and nearly as many ministers, a considerable per cent of them known to have embraced Adventism. [NOTE: This is "about 100 churches" just in Vermont. Emphasis mine] Even churches that remained were partially depleted, larger memberships reporting losses of fifty to one hundred members in a single year through the Adventists. In New Hampshire and Maine quite similar conditions obtained.

"When the failure of Miller's predictions had sobered them, a part of the defecting members returned to their former church relationships, but a large per cent did not, and many never afterward held church relationships. What other denominations lost through the Adventists we are not able to say; but the Christians probably lost several thousand communicants. It is likely that the branch of Adventists known as 'Advent Christians' owes much to the Christian denomination." [Of course, the same should be said of Seventh-day Adventists. M T Morrill, History of the Christian Denomination in America: 1794-1911, 174-76]

Major Christian Leaders Who Become Adventists--Isaac Wellcome, Advent Christian historian, in his History of the Second Advent Message and Mission, also shows the linkage between Christians and Adventists:

"Mr M[iller] writes: This was my first visit to that State. [Massachusetts in 1839] I lectured there, and in Soughton, East Randolph, Lowell, Groton, and Lynn. I closed my lectures at Lynn on the 10th of June following, making 800 lectures which I had given since June 9, 1834. At Lowell, May 14th, I became acquainted with Elder T[imothy] Cole, who had written to me to visit him before I left home. He was among the first ministers in that State who embraced these views, and was the means of introducing me into many of the churches of the Christian connection." [Miller, Apology and Defense, p 20 cited, Wellcome, 74]

77: From the 2d to the 10th of Nov 1839], he lectured in Haverhill, Mass, where he made the acquaintance of Eld Henry Plummer, pastor of the Christian church, who embraced his views, and was a steadfast friend to him, and a faithful minister in the Advent cause, until his death.

"On the 11th of Nov, Mr Miller commenced a course of lectures in Exeter, NH, which continued until the 19th. On the 12th, a conference of the Christian connection was in session there, and they called on Mr Miller in a body. He was a stranger to nearly all of them; and few of them regarded his views with anything more than mere curiosity. Several of them questioned him respecting his faith; but they were speedily silenced by the quotation of appropriate texts of Scripture.

"It was on this occasion that he became acquainted with Eld Joshua V Himes, then pastor of Chardon-street church, Boston. Eld H had written to Mr Miller, on the 19th of Oct, inviting him to give a course of lectures in his chapel. He now renewed his invitation, and got promise of a course of lectures in December."

It was the Christian Connection that brought William Miller to prominence in the large cities. Indeed, Joshua Himes, the man most responsible for bringing Miller into national prominence, was a Christian Connection minister. It was his influence that got Miller speaking appointments in the cities and Miller consistently spoke in Christian Connection churches.

It was the Casco Street Christian Church in Portland, Maine, where Ellen Harmon and her family heard Miller.

Leroy Froom compiled several charts of the leading Millerite expositors on the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Of the 29 leading expositors of Daniel [whose religious affiliation was known] the largest number, 9, were Christians. 7 were Baptists.

Of the 23 expositors of Revelation, 7 were Christian, 5 Methodist.

Step 2: Christian to Adventist to Seventh-day Adventist--
Notice this pilgrimage of the parents of James White:

[My father's] religious experience, of more than sixty years, has been marked with firmness and zeal, and yet with freedom from that bigotry which prevents investigation and advancement, and shuts out love for all who seek to worship God in spirit and in truth....

"My father was immersed and became a Baptist deacon. Still later he embraced the views held by the Christian denomination, which were more liberal and scriptural than those of the Calvinistic Baptists of those days, and communed with that people. The Baptists called a special meeting. The minister and many of the church members were present....They then excluded him for communing with the Christians....[My father] left them with feelings of love and tenderness. He soon joined the Christian church and served them as deacon nearly forty years...

"As early as 1842 my father read with deep interest the lectures of William Miller upon the second coming of Christ. He has ever since that time cherished faith in the leading points of the advent doctrine. In 1860, with my good mother, he embraced the Sabbath, and dwells upon the evidences of the Bible Sabbath with clearness and much pleasure." [LI 10-11]

Here's James' own spiritual pilgrimage:

"At the age of fifteen [1836] I was baptized, and united with the Christian church. But at the age of twenty [1841] I had buried myself in the spirit of study and school teaching, and had lain down the cross. I had never descended to the common sin of profanity, and had not used tobacco, tea and coffee, nor had I ever raised a glass of spirituous liquor to my lips." [Christians and temperance, health. LI 15]

Note what James White gave up upon becoming an Adventist: "I had renounced the doctrine of the conversion of the world, and the temporal millennium, in which the soil and man were to be gradually restored to their Eden state as taught me by my father. I therefore saw the necessity, in the very nature of things, for some great change, and the second coming of Christ seemed to be the event which would most probably bring about the change in man, and in the earth, to remove the curse and its results, and

restore all to its Eden perfection and glory....A strong impression [Christians and "impressions"] came upon me, as if a voice said, Visit your scholars from house to house and pray with them." [LI 18]

Evidence of Theological Affinity Between Christian Connection and Seventh-day Adventists: In 1861, W W Giles [of Giles view of Ellen White inspiration fame] posed to the Review editors this question: "What serious objection is there to the doctrine of the Trinity?"

In the short response version, John Loughborough objected to the doctrine on three grounds: "1. It is contrary to common sense. 2. It is contrary to scripture. 3. Its origin is Pagan and fabulous."

He then went on to devote a column and a half in elaborating his argument. An important part of his rationale was taken from the discussion on the subject by Christian Connection minister Nicholas Summerbell. Early Seventh-day Adventists were clearly familiar with Christian Connection writings. [RH, Nov 5, 1861]

James White was fond of quoting Christian theologian William Kinkade in the Review.

Holy Spirit as an Essence: As late as 1878 D M Canright wrote a three-part series published in the Review entitled "The Holy Spirit Not a Person, but an Influence Proceeding From God." [RH, July 25-Aug 8, 1878]

Obedience to Law as Basis for Inheriting the Kingdom: In 1842, Joseph Marsh, Christian Connection minister and recent convert to Adventism wrote the following in the Christian Palladium, the paper that he edited:

"The Word of the unerring Jehovah is not a book of unimportant requirement, and useless ceremonies, left to the whims and notions of finite, erring mortals, to obey or disobey a part, or the whole, as they may feel disposed. No, no. It is imperative in all its commands, and none have a promise of a right to the 'tree of life,' but those who do them; not such parts as they may choose, but all the commandments." [CP, Sept 1, 1842 in Centennial of Religious Journalism, 108]

The statement is very typical of Christian Connection writing. It is personal obedience, character that brings the inheritance. That position dominated pre-1888 Seventh-day Adventism. Here's an 1868 statement by James White:

"First Class. 'Blessed are they that **do** [emphasis mine]

his commandments, that they may have right [emphasis mine] to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.' Rev 22:14. These are doing right. Although they suffer for well doing, all the hate and slander that wicked men and demons can invent, their reward is the holy city and the tree of life.

"Second Class. 'For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' Verse 15. These are commandment-breakers, and commandment-haters, and haters of those who keep the commandments of God....

"The great design of the sacred Scriptures was to give man a perfect rule of faith and practice. God purposed that his people should follow this rule and by it develop characters perfect before him." [LI 321, 327]

There's one more step in the pilgrimage we've been following and James White is the only one in the nineteenth century SDA church I know of that took it.

Step 3: Christian Connection to Adventist to Seventh-day Adventist to Justification by Faith Seventh-day Adventist [Ellen White was not in the Christian Connection movement]--James and his wife Ellen had resolved in 1881, the year of James's death, to retire from their constant speaking assignments and together prepare studies on "the glorious subject of redemption that should long ago have been more fully presented to the people."

In informing the church of his intention to refocus his message James stated, "We feel that we have a testimony for our people at this time, relative to the exalted character of Christ, and His willingness and power to save."

A fellow minister noted that "as all will remember, wherever he preached the past few months, he dwelt largely upon faith in Christ and the boundless love of God."

A month after the death of her husband Mrs White recounted a significant dream she received after a time of "pleading with the Lord for light in regard to her duty."

She dreamed of riding in her horse-drawn carriage with her husband driving and seated next to her. When she inquired whether James had been resurrected because "half of me was gone" her husband said it was not so. In the dream James continued:

"I have made mistakes, the greatest of which was in allowing my sympathies for the people of God to lead me to take work upon me which others should have borne....

"We might have done a great deal for years with our pens, on subjects the people need that we have had light upon and can present before them, which others do not have. Thus you can work when your strength returns, as it will, and you can do far more with your pen than with your voice....

James continued, "Oh, those precious subjects the Lord would have had me bring before the people, precious jewels of light."

Conclusion

Consider our SDA heritage of religious freedom received from the Christian Connection and notice these Ellen White perspectives:

"The Bible is unchained....Why should not the SDA and Seventh Day Baptist harmonize? Why not co-operate?...One grand lesson should be taught to our children, and that is, freedom from every particle of egotism and bigotry....We should educate the children not to be narrow, but broad; and an agony of desire and a wrestling faith should be encouraged, that God will give them the ability to win souls." [This is practicing religious freedom within the church. 1886--10]

"We are, as I have been shown, constantly liable to error in laying too much stress even on sound ideas and proper forms. Those peculiarities which are not required, if allowed to become so distinct, lessen the force of the positions we are compelled to hold upon sound, essential truths that will distinguish us as God's peculiar people....[EGW on what SDAs should be known for] Faith, love, and holiness are the essentials that give true power to the truth for this time. The manifest absence of these, the little many have known of Christ, and the little we preach Christ's lessons, have been a telling witness against Seventh-day Adventists." [EGW, Ms 55, 1890]

"One man may be conversant with the Scriptures, and some particular portion of the Scripture may be especially appreciated by him, another sees another portion as very important, and thus one may present one point, and another, another point, and both may be of highest value. This is all in the order of God. But if a man makes a mistake in his interpretation of some portion of the Scripture, shall this cause diversity and disunion?--God forbid. We cannot then take a position that the unity of the church consists in viewing every text of scripture in the very same light. The

church may pass resolution upon resolution to put down all disagreement of opinions, [as GIB did in 1886 and wanted done in 1888] but we cannot force the mind and will, and thus root out disagreement. These resolutions may conceal the discord; but they cannot quench it, and establish perfect agreement. Nothing can perfect unity in the church but the spirit of Christ-like forbearance....The great truths of the word of God are so clearly stated that none need make a mistake in understanding them." [EGW, "Love, the Need of the Church, Ms 24, 1892]

1903 GC Session: At the 1903 GC session, Ellen White chose to make a graphic illustration about the need for tolerance within the church. Here's what she told those delegates: "Do not cut any man's hands. I once read of a drowning man who was making desperate efforts to get into a boat close beside him. But the boat was full, and as he grasped the side, those in the boat cut off one of his hands. Then he grasped the boat with the other hand, and that hand was cut off. Then he grasped it with his teeth, and those inside had mercy on him, and lifted him in. But how much better it would have been if they had taken him in before they had cut off his hands. My brethren, do not cut a man to pieces....We are but little children, and we should ever be learning of [God]."