

**A HERITAGE OF FREEDOM:
THE CHRISTIAN CONNECTION ROOTS
TO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM**

(Some Pertinent Documents)

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Introduction

Pioneer Sabbatarian Adventists often concluded major studies with a bit of poetry. Here's how John Nevins Andrews concluded his 1851 tract Thoughts on the Sabbath and the Perpetuity of the Law of God:

"The law reveals and makes us know
What duties to our God we owe;
But 'tis the Gospel must reveal
Where lies our strength to do his will."

The theology was consistent with that of the body of early Sabbatarian Adventists. The gospel brought the believer back to the point where Adam was prior to the fall. Final salvation depended upon obedience to the law. Here's how Andrews expressed the idea:

"By faith in the atonement of the Savior our hearts are cleansed from sin, and we receive the 'renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Then with that perfect love to God restored to us, which Adam lost at his fall, we are prepared to render acceptable obedience to God, and thus to fulfill 'the righteousness of the law.' (Rom 8:3,4,7)." [Andrews 9]

Andrews illustrated another aspect of pioneer thought in 1854:

"If the Advent body itself were to furnish the fathers and the saints for the future church, Heaven pity the people that should live hereafter!" [RH, Jan 31, 1854]

Since Sabbatarian Adventists opposed creeds, they expected

to learn more as time advanced. Andrews concluded:

"Reader we entreat you to prize your Bible. It contains all the will of God, and will make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

A study of the Christian Connection movement offers insight into many aspects of early Seventh-day Adventism.

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

1. Social attitudes--strong antislavery sentiments; heritage of religious freedom; strong orientation toward temperance and health reform; major role for women in the mission of the church.-

2. Organizational structure--early SDA congregational focus; suspicion of any structure beyond the local church; role of conference 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, suspicion of non-Scriptural names and organization; a passionate opposition to creeds.

3. Theology--character was the primary test of fellowship; no creed but the Bible; general opposition to Trinitarianism; Holy Spirit was an "essence," not a member of the Godhead; arian in its view of Christ; strong focus upon sanctification; opposition to imputationist and substitutionary views of atonement; strong emphasis upon obedience to God's law.

The Washington, New Hampshire Connection

The Seventh-day Adventist church was born in Washington, NH. It thus rightfully claims a strong heritage of religious and political freedom. You don'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 town is especially important to Seventh-day Adventists because it is the first known location where the seventh day Sabbath and the Advent united.

Rachel Oakes, a Seventh Day Baptist convinced Frederick Wheeler, minister of the church in Washington, NH, of the seventh day Sabbath. Then other members of that church accepted and it 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."

The 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, Millerite minister Joshua Goodwin convinced the members of the soon return of Christ. Some evidence points to Christian Connection/Millerite minister Joseph Bates having a role in that church becoming Adventist.

That made the Washington, NH, Christian church one of hundreds of New England Christian Connection churches that looked upward for the soon return of Jesus.

After Bates accepted the Sabbath in 1845, he traveled to that congregation and with them solidified belief in the seventh day Sabbath.

Some of the members of that Christian Connection church who would become prominent in the SDA church were named Farnsworth, Mead, Russell, Ball, Huntley. 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 evident in the Scriptures. Adventists even exhibited a willingness to accept the insights of a woman as they received truth.

One other element was present: tolerance.

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

Frederick Wheeler, who 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 there is diversity, but a unity over central issue. At least five different religious faiths formed the initial SDA church.

It is fascinating to observe that, while most other religious faiths barred their doors to "Adventists" and especially to Sabbatarian Adventists, Christian Connection

churches, including the one in Washington, NH, allowed Sabbathkeepers use of their church for meetings. Throughout the 1850s, Sabbatarian Adventists regularly held conferences at the Christian meeting house. It seems unsurprising that a number of Christian Connection believers converted to Sabbatarianism.

A Brief History of the Christian Connection

Here's a listing of the founders of the Christian movement by Milo T Morrill, historian of the Christian Connection:

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, sometimes quoted by James White after White was a SDA. Morrill 64-65].

The Christians developed simultaneously in three separate areas within the United States at about the same time without the groups knowing of each other.

The Christian Connection movement owed its theological underpinning to a reaction to what church historian Nathan Hatch called "the passive quality of Calvinist religious experience."

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

"We urged upon the sinner to believe now, and receive

salvation--that in vain they looked for the Spirit to be given them, while they remained in unbelief...that no previous qualification was required, or necessary in order to believe in Jesus, and come to him...When we began first to preach these things, the people appeared as just awakened from the sleep of ages--they seemed to see for the first time that they were responsible beings." [Hatch 172-73]

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. Hatch counts the combined Christians and Disciples of Christ.]

In 1892 Christians had 118,229 believers. SDAs 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.

Religious Freedom

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

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.'" [Hatch 76]

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

"In the rise of the Christian Church, we have seen that one of the great fundamental principles for which they all strongly contended, was, the right and duty of private judgment, and taking the Bible, and that alone, as the only role of faith and practice. They also contended that Christian character should be the only test of Christian fellowship, and that it would be just as consistent to blame God for not giving all faces alike, as to blame Him for not giving all the same mind, in order that they might believe alike. This led them to adopt and practice the principle of charity toward each other; and although locality or circumstance might have led them to adopt different sentiments, with regard to the teachings of the Bible, yet, if after a careful examination they still continued to believe the same, and, withal, acted out the character of a Christian, they were

accepted into the church, and enjoyed all the privileges belonging thereunto." [Freese 40]

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 similarity on social freedoms.

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]

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. Joseph Bates of the Christian Connection established the first temperance society in America in the 1820s.

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 [as a movement] 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." [Morrill 363]

Nancy Cram was a famous Christian minister in New York state between 1812-16. 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.

Antioch College--Established in 1850, Antioch 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, described 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 48-49]

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]

Similarity of Name Issue With Advent Christians and Seventh-day Adventists--Those Christians that became Adventists and maintained their Advent faith after 1844 went several different directions, but the largest groups were the Advent Christians and Seventh-day Adventists. Both groups had major debates over the question of the name to be chosen.

The way the name "Seventh-day Adventists" was accepted was when it was clearly stated that it was merely a recommendation and not compulsory. Each local church voted on acceptance or rejection of the name "Seventh-day Adventist." Even so, some left the Sabbatarian group over suggestion of a name not explicitly stated in Scripture.

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." [Morrill 126]

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." [MacClenny 150]

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 in the areas of social and organizational issues, it is even more significant in the theological realm.

Doctrinal Freedom and Beliefs

"By sin we were exposed to wrath
He died for us, that he might draw
Our wandering feet to virtue's path.
Where we may keep God's holy law."

So concluded Joseph H Waggoner in his major Review article, "The Law of God: An Examination of the Testimony of Both Testaments." [RH July 25, 1854]

Joseph Bates, James White, John Nevins Andrews and especially George Butler and Uriah Smith agreed.

The key text to early Sabbatarian Adventists was Revelation 22:14, KJV:

"Blessed are they that **DO** his commandments, that they may have **RIGHT** to the tree of life."

The key phrase of believers who communicated with each other and the Review editor was "Sincerely yours, striving to overcome."

Spiritual Pilgrimage--"No creed but the Bible" eventually led many Christians 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.

An entire church of Christians in New York State accepted the seventh-day Sabbath in the early 1820s.

2. Thousands became Adventists because Millerites were so immersed in the Scriptures that they could convince Christians that those Scriptures pointed to a literal, visible return of Christ. Adventist Christians thus moved from a postmillennial to a premillennial position.

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

Biblical Sabbath.

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 the entire pilgrimage. Although he died in 1881, he made the transition to a post-1888 view of salvation in his last year of life.

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." [Morrill 190]

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

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 68-69]

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

"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." [Kinkade 218. Emphasis mine.]

"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." [Kinkade 246-47. Emphasis mine.]

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. 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." [The same should be said of Seventh-day Adventists. Morrill, 174-76]

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. He 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.

Historian Whitney Cross made this observation:

"The Millerites who gathered during the early forties came from all denominations, but in the largest numbers from the Baptist, Free Baptist and Christian churches. Like the Christians, these Adventists claimed to be nonsectarian, and noncreedal except for a literal belief in Scripture." [Cross 262-63]

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--
"Shut door" theology that pervaded early Sabbatarian Adventism created a scenario where early ranks were necessarily formed by former Millerites. The Washington, NH, church is only one example where Sabbatarian Adventists obtained a hearing from Christian churches to proclaim the Sabbath. Openness and tolerance of Christians offered Sabbatarians welcomed opportunities.

Additionally, Christian Connection editors opened their publications for dialogue on the Sabbath. Indeed, when James

White learned of a major dropping of names from the mailing list of the Harbinger and Advocate [edited by Christian Connection editor Joseph Marsh], he urged Sabbatarian Adventists to donate funds to enable him to send those that were dropped free subscriptions to the Review. [RH, Nov 25, 1851]

Earliest Sabbatarian ministerial labor was dominated by former Christian Connection ministers. James White wrote this about the 1848-49 period:

"The subject of the Sabbath was growing clearer, and up to this time the foregoing positions were being presented to small congregations (solely) by Bro Bates and myself." [White 290. Emphasis mine.]

Here is the spiritual 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.

"At the age of 21 he was sprinkled, and joined the Congregational church, but never felt satisfied that in being sprinkled he had received Christian baptism. Several years later, a Baptist minister came into that new part of the State and taught immersion. 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. During this entire period he was present at every conference meeting held by the church, excepting one, which, according to their custom, was held on Saturday afternoon of every fourth week.

"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." [White 10-11. Emphasis mine.]

James also gave his 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. White 15]

Here's 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." [White 18. Emphasis mine.]

Christians moved from post- to premillennialism upon becoming Adventists.

Evidence of Theological Affinity Between Christian Connection and Seventh-day Adventists: In 1861, W W Giles 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]

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." [Christian Palladium, Sept 1, 1842 in Barrett 108]

The statement is typical of Christian Connection writing. It is personal obedience 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....

"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." [White 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 [James] preached the past few months, he dwelt largely upon faith in Christ and the boundless love of God." [D M Canright, "My Remembrance of Eld White," RH, Aug 30, 1881.]

Conclusion

Consider the SDA heritage of 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." [EGW, "The Sabbath School as a Missionary Field," Sabbath School Worker, Oct 1886]

"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....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, 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]

"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]." [EGW, "The Work Before Us," talk at 1903 GC session, April 5, 1903, 1903 GCDB 104.]

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