

Adventist

by Bill Crews

Six present-day denominations exist as the fruit or consequences of the “Adventist Movement” inaugurated by William Miller. The two largest are “The Seventh-Day Adventist Church” and “The Advent Christian Church.”

William Miller was born in 1782 and died in 1849. As a result of his highly speculative and mistaken interpretations of some Bible prophecies, he predicted the end of the world between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. When the expected return of Christ did not materialize, Miller and his associates set another date, October 22, 1844. Afterward, various advocates in the Adventist Movement set other dates: 1847, 1850, 1852, 1854, 1855, 1863, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1877, et. al. As the dates came and went, many disciples of Adventism deserted the ranks, but explanations were always forthcoming, loopholes were found, and some doggedly embraced its principles and followed its leaders. William Miller and others were, and some still are, considered prophets of God.

In spite of the failures of Miller’s predictions, a sizable group met in Albany, New York in 1845 and formed the “American Millerite Association.” Some afterward formed the “Evangelical Adventist,” a group that has dwindled away. In 1861, under the leadership of Jonathan Cummings, the “Advent Christian Church” was organized.

James White and Ellen G. Harmon, who became Mrs. James White, found a way to patch up Miller’s predictions by transferring the fulfillment from earth (where it clearly did not occur) to heaven (where they could claim that it did). They and others championed the idea of observing the Sabbath of the Old Testament. Through their efforts the “Seventh-Day Adventist Church” was organized. Headquarters were set up in Battle Creek, Michigan in 1855; in 1903 they were moved to Washington, D.C. It was in 1860 that the name “Seventh-Day Adventist” was officially adopted.

Mrs. White claimed to have had visions and to have received revelations.

She authored several letters, testimonies, articles and books. Her claim: “In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my ideas. They are what God opened before me in vision — the precious rays of light shining from the throne” (**Testimony No. 31, p. 63**) She said also: “If you lessen the confidence of God’s people in the testimonies he has sent them (meaning, of course, Mrs. White’s testimonies —B.C.), you are rebelling against God as certainly as were Kora, Dathan, and Abiram.” (**Testimony No. 31, p. 62**). Mrs. White was no more inspired than was Joseph Smith (founder of “Mormonism”) or was Mrs. Eddy (founder of “Christian Science”), and the church she established was no more the Lord’s church than were the churches they established.

— **Church Origins, A Preceptor Publication, p. 3**

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