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Has the Leopard Changed His Spots?

Some Facts About Seventh-Day Adventism—
the Sect that Has "TWO GOSPELS"

Christians today need spiritual discernment as never before. The Enemy is working with unprecedented craft and zeal to foist upon sincere people his cunningly devised counterfeits. Among these traps for the unwary we have in our midst an anti-Christian sect that is making a serious bid to gain recognition as a denomination of evangelical Christians. This group is known by the name of "Seventh-Day Adventists."

A fact not generally understood among non-Adventists is that this sect has TWO "gospels." One of its "gospels" is proclaimed *publicly*, the other *privately*. Rarely will one find false doctrine in the "gospel" which the Adventists present for general consumption. In their use of radio and television, as an example, they are careful to adhere strictly to their public "gospel." Through these effective mediums of dissemination they piously preach salvation by grace through faith, without the works of the law—cleverly prepared sermons which, in most respects, are as true to the Gospel of Christ as one will hear anywhere. This designed-to-deceive approach is what makes Seventh-Day Adventism such a grave peril to unestablished and unsuspecting believers.

Has any non-Adventist ever heard it stated on the sect's "Voice of Prophecy" radio broadcast that the keeping of Sunday instead of Saturday is "the mark of the beast"? Or has any such listener ever heard an Adventist speaker publicly

state that the Seventh-Day Adventists constitute, exclusively, what they call "the remnant church," or "the one true church of the last days"? For proof of their special right to this designation, they claim that they alone have a "heaven-sent prophet"—Mrs. E. G. White, long since deceased. They insist that this "distinction," plus their claim of being the only "true commandment-keepers," gives them the two "marks" of the "latter-day church" found (?) in Rev. 12:17! They also contend that they are the "remnant of Israel," or the 144,000 of Rev. 7:1-4, who alone, they claim, will be translated when Christ returns!

In submitting their "Articles of Faith" to the editors of *Look* magazine a few years ago for publication, the Adventists ran true to form. They presented only such of their doctrines as could never be construed as being out of harmony with the Christian faith, while many of their foundational beliefs—those teachings that are both discordant and destructive—were either barely mentioned or ignored altogether. This has ever been the group's method of propagation; but how diametrically opposite to the perfect forthrightness of our Lord Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry! He declared, "I spake openly to the world; . . . in secret have I said nothing . . ." (John 18:20-21).

The Adventist movement, in embryo form, came into existence during the quarter-century period of 1818-1843, when its actual originator, one William Miller, presumptuously set the time for Christ's second advent to occur in March of the latter year. Homes were broken up, farms were sold and businesses closed, in preparation for the expected event. But the Lord did not come! So Miller decided a mistake had been made in his calculations, and the time for Christ's return was moved ahead to October 22, 1844. But again the guess was wrong; the Lord did not come.

Our point in mentioning this is not so much to show that early-day Adventists were twice mis-

taken in their calculations. It is done, rather, to emphasize the significant fact that the movement was launched by means of deception, and that at its very beginning it was contrary to Scripture. Our Lord declared, over and over again, that it is not given to man to know the day nor the hour of His return. (See Matt. 24:36, 44; Mark 13:32; Luke 21:35.)

Now to briefly outline and discuss a few of the teachings of Adventism:

1. *Mrs. E. G. White.* The Adventists' foremost leader and "inspired" teacher, was one Mrs. Ellen Gould White. With her husband, James White, she took over the reins of leadership when finally disillusioned William Miller renounced it all as a mistake. Mrs. White claimed that God had chosen her to be His special "messenger" or prophet, to "the church of the latter days."

She professed to have had many "visions" direct from God. She wrote various books based upon these "revelations," and prepared several volumes of so-styled "testimonies," intended for the instruction of her disciples. Adventists look upon her writings as having been inspired in the same sense as were the holy Scriptures. In fact, her books are quoted from by her credulous followers just as Christians quote the Scriptures.

2. *Jesus Christ.* Seventh-Day Adventism teaches much that is positively blasphemous concerning the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Publicly, the Adventists would have all people believe that they trust in and worship the same Divine Saviour and Lord as do true Christians; but this is not according to fact. For example, in their latest denominational textbook ("Questions on Doctrine," published late in 1957), they teach that Christ "could have sinned; He could have fallen." . . . "Our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to tempta-

tion." . . . "He entered into the life of humanity, bearing our flesh and blood." (Pgs. 651, 653, 666.)

Every adequately instructed evangelical knows that a "christ" whose nature was the same as that of sinful mankind, would himself need a saviour. But the *true Christ*—the Christ of the Bible—was "the true God" (I John 5:20); He was "GOD . . . manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16). Therefore, He was "without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He was the divinely, eternally sinless One—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate (innately distinct) from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). As the incarnate Son of God, Christ was immune to sin (see John 14:30; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). He "knew no sin," hence He "did no sin" (II Cor. 5:21; I Peter 2:22).

And the Bible also plainly declares that Christ's "precious" atoning blood was free from every possible taint of impurity. He was as "a lamb, without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:19). No other blood save incorruptible, Divine blood, could wash away our sins. How great the crime of those who detract from its infinite immaculateness, and would thus destroy its power to save!

3. *The Atonement.* Seventh-Day Adventism teaches that Satan is destined to share with Christ in the holy work of atoning for man's sins! This shocking, Bible-denying doctrine is found in the "scapegoat" theory of the sect. As any properly taught Christian knows, the two goats described in Leviticus 16 symbolized our Saviour in two different aspects of His ministry of reconciliation. But as the Adventists contend, one of those goats was a type of Satan, upon whom, they insist, will eventually be laid the sins of all the impenitent, and for whose transgressions the Devil must at last suffer in the fires of hell (that is, until he is finally annihilated!).

It is indeed no wonder that such a Christ-defaming doctrine is never taught on the "Voice of

Prophecy" program. What would it do to the Adventists' pretensions of being sound in the Christian faith were this evil heresy to be taught openly? The answer is obvious. Let the reader compare the Adventists' "scapegoat" teaching with the clear truth of God's holy Word,—Isa. 53:5-11; John 1:29; Col. 1:20-22; I Peter 2:24; Heb. 1:3. Anyone who thinks that Seventh-Day Adventism could possibly be of God should carefully investigate its supposed "all-essential sanctuary truth," an "indispensable" part of which is this repugnant "scapegoat" theory.

4. *"Soul-Sleep and Annihilationism.* Adventists do not believe in either of the Bible-founded doctrines known as, (1) The immediate Home-going of the righteous dead, and (2) The eternal conscious punishment of the wicked dead in hell.

As for the teaching called "soul-sleep," there is no such thing to be found in the Word of God. The Adventists contend that "the whole man" (by which term they mean the body and soul of man *only*, not his spirit; but see I Thess. 5:23) goes into the grave at death and there remains "asleep" (or dead) until the judgment, when all—both the righteous and the unrighteous—will be raised. It is obvious, however, to the careful student of the Scriptures, that this is error, and that such passages as Dan. 12:2; I Cor. 15:51; and I Thess. 4:13, where the word "sleep" occurs, refer in each instance to the body, not to the "inner man," or the God-breathed imperishable spirit and soul which, by Divine creation, indwell the body of every member of the human family. (See Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7, 21-23).

Stephen "fell asleep" as to his body, but he never expected that *he*—his spirit and soul—would go into the grave, because he cried out, when expiring, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" (meaning his soul as well as his spirit—Acts 7:59, 60; compare I Peter 4:19). Nor did Paul, on

reaching the end of his earthly course, expect his spirit and soul would go into the grave with his body, but "rather be absent from the body, and present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23).

As for the Adventists' teaching called "annihilationism," or the sect's bold denial of the Bible doctrine of the eternal conscious punishment of the wicked dead in hell, their belief is the same as that held by the cult known as "Jehovah's Witnesses," which tenet has no basis whatsoever in Scripture. Irrefutable Bible facts on the subject of eternal punishment, will be found in such clear passages as the following: Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10.

5. *The Church and the Law.* Seventh-Day Adventists teach that all Christians, or the Church, must keep the law given to Israel at Sinai. They insist that any professing Christian failing to keep it will come under its judgment, and that only those who do keep this law will in the end be saved. Mrs. White, for example, declares that, "In order to be prepared for judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God" ("The Great Controversy," pg. 436). Again, she declares, "The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been, . . . perfect obedience to the law of God" ("Steps to Christ," pg. 67).

Seventh-Day Adventists profess to keep the sabbath of the law, a day of compulsory cessation from all labor, which was given exclusively to Israel as a nation (see Ex. 16:23-30; 31:12-17), but was never meant for the Church (see Acts 15:22-29; Gal. 4:4-11; Col. 2:13-17). In reality, the Adventists, who refer to themselves as "modern Israel," observe only such of the original sabbath requirements as suit them. For example, they do not hesitate to do that which they conveniently call "necessary work" on the seventh day, wilfully ignoring the specific command, "In it thou shalt not do any work."

Seventh-Day Adventism's sabbath tenet is an important integrant of the sect's "false front"—a show of supposed full compliance with the expressed will of God, behind which make-believe "commandment keeping" its adherents feel free to disregard the holy principle of honesty as laid down in the Bible. (See Ps. 34:13; Eph. 4:25; I Peter 2:1; etc.) Propagators of the cult's so-styled "sabbath truth" challenge untaught people to "show where in Scripture the sabbath was ever changed." They then affirm that it was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week by man, not God, their deceptive claim being that Emperor Constantine made the change in 321 A.D. in obedience to a demand made upon him by the Pope of Rome! Anyone at all familiar with church history will at once recognize this as a glaringly false statement, since there was no Pope prior to 610 A.D.!

Such subterfuge is obviously designed to hide the real truth—the explicit Gospel teaching that the law of commandments (which, of course, included the requirement of sabbath observance) was entirely done away in Christ. (See Col. 2:13-17; II Cor. 3:7-14; Gal. 3:19-25.) One can but wonder if it ever has occurred to the Adventists—these loudly professed "commandment-keeping people of God"—that the decalogue includes the clear demand, "Thou shalt not bear false witness"!

Adventists do not accept dispensational truth, which is an essential to understanding the Word. Consequently, they mix Church truth with truth for Israel, and insist on placing the Church under the law, disregarding the clear teaching of the Church epistles that believers today "are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14).

I have known sincere people to say they have never heard the Adventists preach anything that sounded false. Such a statement is probably true, because that which the public usually hears them preach is only the bait. For anyone who is taken

in by the bait, the hook is yet to come. Even then, those who are victimized will be indoctrinated only by gradual steps into this system of error.

One of the most satisfactory ways of checking Adventist teachings is to examine the contents of their own books. A few of the sect's authorized doctrinal volumes are: "Bible Readings for the Home" (compiled by an officially appointed editorial committee); "The Great Controversy," "The Desire of Ages," "Testimonies for the Church," and "Early Writings of Mrs. White" (all by Mrs. White); also "Thoughts on Daniel and The Revelation" (by Uriah Smith). Anyone making a study of Seventh-Day Adventism (and none but mature, properly taught believers of the rightly divided Word of Truth should ever consider doing so), should prayerfully follow the example of the earnest, truth-seeking Bereans as recorded in Acts 17.

It is tragic that some, who hold positions of responsibility among sound evangelical groups, have apparently been led to believe that at last the "leopard" has changed his "spots." But no such thing has happened. The Adventists still teach all of the unscriptural doctrines which they have held from the beginning. Nor do they have any intention of renouncing their spurious "messenger," with her Scripture-distorting teachings. What they believe is now a matter of record.

Let the reader carefully study the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, particularly the third chapters in each of these books. There he will find the marvellous grace of God clearly set forth—the Good News that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," and that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

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