

Grant, Miles

(1819–1911)

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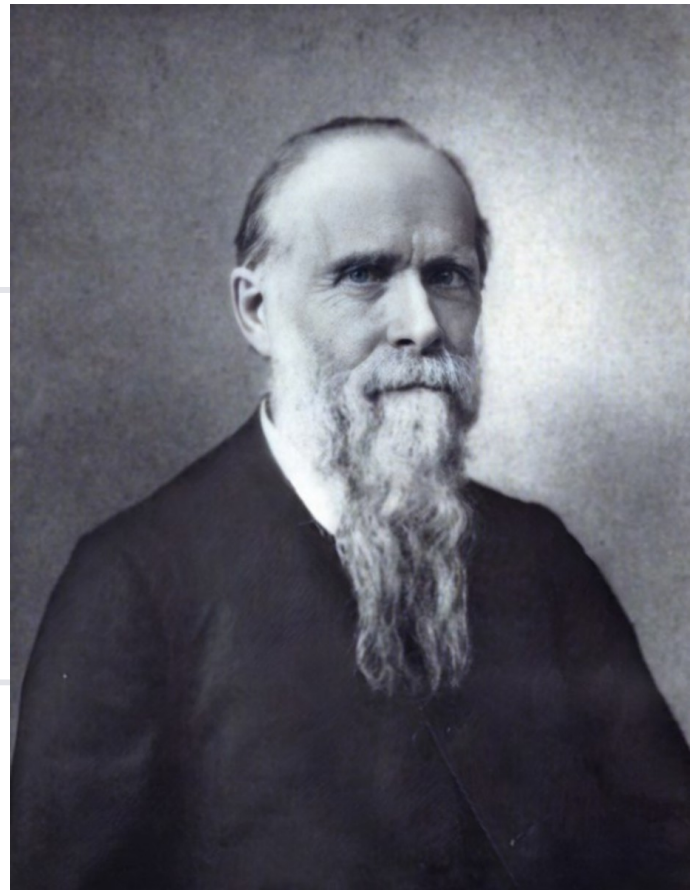
Miles Grant, an Advent Christian leader and editor of *The World's Crisis and Second Advent Messenger*, was a vocal opponent of Seventh-day Adventism.

Born in Connecticut in 1819, Grant taught school for a few years in his early twenties. He converted to Christian faith during the Millerite movement in 1843 and then associated with the Methodist church for some years. In the years following the Millerite

movement, a number of Adventist denominations were formed. Still convinced of the soon return of Christ and the non-immortality of the soul, in 1854, Grant began to identify with the group of Adventists publishing *The World's Crisis*. He then joined the Advent Christians, became the editor of their journal in 1856, and helped with the formal organization of their denomination in 1860. His preaching career and leadership among Advent Christians lasted nearly sixty years.

Champion Debater

From the beginning of his ministry, Grant became known as someone who “not only held clear and pronounced convictions, but he held them, and they held him, with a strength and intensity rarely experienced.”¹ In other words, he earned a reputation as “a champion debater on religious questions.”² While Seventh-day Adventists often referred positively to Grant’s publications on the non-immortality of the soul and his endorsement of health reform,³ Grant’s opposition to Sabbath observance caused much friction and sometimes heated public



Miles Grant

From F. L. Piper, *Life and Labors of Miles Grant* (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1915). Shared by Douglas Morgan.

debates.⁴ One of these many debates – between Grant and Merritt Cornell in 1866 – was published as a book and used by Seventh-day Adventists in answering arguments against Sabbath observance.⁵

Much rivalry between Advent Christians and Seventh-day Adventists came from the fact that preachers of these two Adventist denominations seemed to be purposefully shadowing each other and seeking to steal some of each other's converts.⁶ But as the years went by, Grant's antagonism became more aggressive and offensive.

Critic of Ellen White

By the 1870s, Grant also became a fierce opponent of Ellen White's ministry, using every opportunity to disparage her work and influence. In 1874, he published an article in which he claimed Ellen White had been involved in fanaticism in connection with the Israel Dammon incidents in 1845⁷ and had believed the whole world was condemned to eternal punishment (shut door). Grant was one of the first persons to publicly raise these critiques against Ellen White. In response, a special *Review and Herald Extra* was published in 1874 to address Grant's many claims and accusations and to deny the charges against Ellen White.⁸ The relationship between Grant and Seventh-day Adventists deteriorated even more after 1874.

A few weeks after Ellen White, in October 1885, Grant sailed to Europe for a second time. After a month in England, he traveled to Torre Pellice, in northern Italy, where he rented the same hall that Ellen White and other pastors were using to hold meetings. The rivalry and hostility toward Ellen White's ministry and Seventh-day Adventist teachings were obvious. In spite of opposition, Ellen White went right on with her meetings, making no reference to Grant, and hoping to reach the hearts of the few who came to hear her.⁹ Reflecting on Grant's slanderous attacks during this visit and at other times, she said:

During all these years one of the principal burdens of his work seems to have been to follow on my track and spread these statements which have been manufactured by false witnesses. . . . It has been shown again and again, both by pen and voice and by the testimony of many witnesses, that these reports have no foundation in truth; but what cares he for this? He loves his falsehoods too well to give them up!¹⁰

A few years later, in early April 1889, while conducting meetings in Chicago, Ellen White received a surprising visit from Mrs. Mary Grant, who had a sister living in Chicago. "I had an introduction to her in my room, and we had a pleasant visit," she wrote to her son, W. C. White:

She said that she did not know that I would care to meet the wife of Miles Grant, as he and I were sharp antagonists, but I said to her that I had made no raid upon her husband, it was he that had followed me and made a raid upon me. She talked very pleasantly, and commended the manner in which we are doing our work in such cities as Chicago. She said that she had told her husband that as a people we were showing a commendable zeal in live missionary work, while they, as a people, were doing very little, and were really dying out for want of just such methods of labor as Seventh-day Adventists were employing.¹¹

During six decades of ministry, Grant served as editor of the *World's Crisis* for nearly twenty years and travelled extensively in Europe, India and the south Pacific. He spent his last years in Chelsea, Massachusetts, and Los Angeles. He continued to speak regularly at Advent Christian events until his death at age 91.

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NOTES

1. F. L. Piper, *Life and Labors of Miles Grant* (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1915), 48.
2. Piper, *Life and Labors of Miles Grant*, v.
3. "Books Received," *ARH*, August 21, 1866, 96.
4. For example, A. S. Hutchings, "Discussion in Melbourne," *ARH*, November 13, 1860, 205-206; J. N. Loughborough, "Discussion at Manchester, N. H.," *ARH*, March 1, 1864 (the account of this debate covered three entire pages of this issue); "The Work at Large," *The Present Truth*, September 24, 1881, 317-318.
5. "Discussion on the Sabbath Question, held in Library Hall, Chelsea, Mass., Nov. 1869, Between Eld. Miles Grant, Editor of the World's Crisis, Boston, and Eld. M. E. Cornell, of Battle Creek, Mich." (Steam Press: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Assoc., 1869).
6. J. N. Loughborough, "California," *ARH*, March 5, 1872, 94; "William Henry Wil obituary," *Lake Union Herald*, November 7, 1917, 7; Marion Belchambers, "Growing Up With the Work," *Eastern Tidings*, Pioneer Number Extra, (38:9a) May 8, 1941, 14.
7. James R. Nix, "Damman, Israel (1811-1886)," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, ed. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 358-360.
8. *Advent Review and Herald of the Sabbath—Extra*, April 14, 1874; Ellen G. White to John N. Loughborough, August 24, 1874, Letter 2c, 1874, Ellen G. White Estate, egwwritings.org.
9. Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Lonely Years: 1876-1891*, vol. 3, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1984), 335.
10. Ellen G. White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Basle, Switzerland: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), 236.
11. Ellen G. White to William C. White, April 7, 1889, Letter 1, 1889, Ellen G. White Estate, egwwritings.org.

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