

CHAPTER I

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

The Seventh-day Adventists trace their history back to a man by the name of Mr. William Miller. Mr. Miller was born on February 15, 1782 A.D. in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. While he was still a young child, his family moved to Low Hampton, New York which is located near the border of the State of Vermont. Mr. Miller grew up there, and took up farming as his occupation. Although he was reared by a godly mother, he forsook her religious instruction and became a deist. However, he was later converted and became a Baptist. Shortly after his conversion, he was taunted by a deist friend with having a blind faith in the Bible. Mr. Miller was convinced that if the Bible was really the Word of God, it must be consistent. Therefore, he resolved to make a systematic and thorough study of the Bible, and to harmonize all the apparent contradictions in it. The only helps he had at his disposal were the marginal references in his Bible, and a concordance. He began his study in 1816 A.D. and continued it over a period of six years. During the course of his study, he became greatly interested in the second coming of Christ.

As he studied this doctrine he came to the conclusion that the Bible predicted the time when Jesus would come back to earth. He did not believe that this time would be in the distant future as many others in his day were teaching, but that it would be some time between March 21, 1843 A.D. and March 21, 1844 A.D. I quote Mr. Miller's own words. He said:

I believe the time can be known by all who desire to understand and to be ready for His coming. And I am fully convinced that some time between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844, according to the Jewish mode of computation of time, Christ will come and bring all His saints with Him;