

Seventh-Day Adventists.

A WOMAN'S POWER.

[The following from the Chicago Daily Times we publish by request.—ED.]

BATTLE CREEK, Mich., Aug. 22.—[Special.]—The Seventh-Day Adventists here have arrived at that stage which comes in the history of every religious organization ruled upon principles of despotism—the stage when the spirit of doubt and dissension makes a formidable appearance. Unity in management and implicit obedience have secured for the Adventists here and elsewhere great success in business as well as in proselyting. The ministers and the flocks have lived under the dominion of two potent forces which have controlled them in both public and private affairs. These forces were Elder White, who died in August, 1881, and his wife; the former possessing an iron will and great power of action, and the latter supplementing with the gift of prophecy and revelation. Mr. White exercised the authority of a second Moses, and was very autocratic in his management. Mrs. White, now turned 50 years, has been accepted for thirty-five years as the only one selected in the world since biblical times to reveal God's will and interpret the Scriptures in case of doubt or controversy. Considering the character of our age and the mingling of the Adventists with the world classes of society, it is doubtful if any religious leaders in Christendom ever brought into such subjection so large a body of people as this couple have been able to do. They have been vigilant to guard against the danger of skepticism, and any doubter who popped up was quickly spotted, and either suppressed or driven out of the fold.

TO FORESTALL THE SKEPTIC, an early vision—Mrs. White's first vision occurred in 1844—declared that anyone who should doubt her visions as inspired and infallible upon any matters they might touch would commit the sin never to be forgiven—the sin against the Holy Ghost. Hitherto this revelation scheme has been conducted with great success, and with rare exceptions implicit obedience has been given to her oracles. The will of God was that her people should wear a health-reform dress, a modified bloomer costume, having the dress nine inches above the floor. It was, however, maliciously observed that when the dress reformer

went away from home she wore a long dress to travel in; and so it was difficult for her to persuade all the sisters to adopt the dress. Now it is even at home discarded by Mrs. White. Her people were enjoined to observe the prayer of faith for the sick publicly and privately, she claiming to have been raised by it many times from a sick bed; to wear no ornaments, use no tobacco, tea or coffee, eat no meat, especially pork, and take but two meals per day; give liberally to the church, and observe certain other practices.

In 1867 or 1868 the walls were partly built for a new sanitarium, when God or his angel appeared to Mrs. White, and his will was revealed as unfavorable to the work, and forthwith the walls were leveled to the ground. Sometimes the visionist would throw her divine rays into the household of the flock, and reveal to them that God thought one or more members were indulging to excess in this or that direction; or that God desired them to do this or that thing, sometimes respecting domestic affairs and sometimes business transactions. With the powerful

INSTRUMENT OF SUPERSTITION

the old Jewish tithing system has been severely maintained. Collections are promptly made every month upon all the members throughout the world, and large amounts of property have been secured in the form of donations and bequests. The poor, especially, have paid dearly for their theology. Owing to this, also, the leaders have built up an immense sanitarium, tabernacle, college, and publishing houses. The latter have, through the religious pressure, practically the power to enforce at a round price upon nearly all members of the sect the books and periodicals they publish for sale. Even a vision of Mrs. White is distributed to the members at a good price. For the sake of the Lord, also, employees are expected to be contented with under wages; while the stockholders are required to assign over to the institution whatever dividends may be declared.

Through a zealous and aggressive energy their church presses its ministers into new fields, and in most of the states they have itinerants traveling about with tents, to deliver proselyting lectures. The sect now numbers between twenty-five and thirty thousand members, there being nearly five thousand in this State, three thousand or four

thousand in Iowa, and about fifteen hundred on the Pacific coast, and branch works in other States, and in England and other countries of Europe.

The Adventists, although an offshoot of the Millerites, have incorporated into their system the features of three or four other religious sects, thus: The Sabbath doctrine was taken from the Seventh-Day Baptists; the unconscious state of the dead, from George Storrs; the prophetic periods and the second coming of Christ, from William Miller. To the Shakers they are similar in believing themselves God's chosen people; that spiritual gifts are perpetuated; that a system of health reform must be observed; and, above all, in having a female prophetess divinely inspired, like the famous Mrs. Ann Lee.

In the earlier career of Mrs. White, she seems to have thought it necessary to obtain the divine illumination in a trance state; about as a spiritualist medium—the Adventists think the spiritualists

CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL.

When Mrs. White felt the hand of God upon her she would fall prostrate and become so rigid and inanimate that the leaders present affirmed they could not detect any breathing. As she advanced in years, however, this condition of receiving the spirit probably became troublesome and disagreeable, and she has grown into the belief that whatever she dreams, or sees fit to write, is inspired, and of binding force upon the church members. It is the tendency of prophets and revelators to degenerate too much into particularizing, and that tendency has influenced her until the most trivial and personal affairs have come to be accounted worthy of God's notice or interference. For instance, the Lord has observed that Mr. A. is increasing his family too rapidly; that Mr. B. is paying too much attention to Miss C.; that Mr. D. is too avaricious, and gives too little to the church; that Mr. E. ought not to be engaged to Miss F., and that Mr. G. ought to separate from Mrs. G. As illustrating the extent to which she controls the conduct of a slavish people, take the following instance: A young couple several years since plighted their hearts to one another, it is said, but Mrs. W. received a revelation that the young man would be an exacting and selfish husband, and God desired the girl not to marry him. Although there was no abatement in their

mutual affection, reverence for the vision held them apart until love got the better of superstition, and they married a few days since. In the Adventist college here the young man was the doubting Thomas among the students, and was wont to confuse the professors, and even Elder White, with theological inquiries. Mrs. White being informed of this, it is supposed, was inspired respecting the troublesome young man as aforesaid. Another instance of this character is related, to the effect that her inspiration procured the separation of a leader in the church from his wife, to whom he was fondly attached. In fact, the *Times* correspondent is informed that a part of the

BUSINESS OF THE LORD,

as transacted through this agent, has been to make and unmake matches. One illustration of a different kind: The cook at the sanitarium was well seasoning the apple sauce with sugar, and increasing the nutrition and palatableness of the bread and crackers by the use of plenty of sweet milk, thereby, also, increasing the cost. Notwithstanding the malicious assertion that the management of the sanitarium desired to economize in the expense of the cuisine department by cheaper methods of cooking, the truth is the Lord became anxious for the health of the inmates of the institution, and protested in a vision of Mrs. White against the conduct of the cook, and, also, of the waiting girls for nibbling between meals. From time to time individuals who dared to doubt have been proscribed and obliged to sever themselves from the organization; but the authority of Mrs. White has not been seriously in danger until since the death of Elder White, two years ago. She still holds the fort, but within a year it may well be believed that able leaders of the church have been aroused at heart against her, and now sit on the fence as respects her claims to divine inspiration. In a controversy which arose here among the college professors she, while in Oakland, Cal., took sides, and was inspired to censure, among others, the most learned man in the denomination. The censured elder, knowing her to be inspired upon exparte testimony, sent the vision back to her to be revised according to the facts. The language was changed, and before publication was again changed, showing how easily the Lord, or Mrs. White's Lord, may be misin-