

# Ellen G. White

## and the Cosmology Question

BY CHRIS SPARKS

Today, the question of whether the Earth is a globe or a flat plane has become widely agitated. It's true that there are multiple statements in the Spirit of Prophecy where Sister White draws from the heliocentric model and describes the Earth orbiting around the sun. However, one must carefully consider the following statement which Sister White wrote towards the end of her ministry:

On Sunday afternoon I urged the truth with more decided firmness and power. A man was present who had expressed a desire to see me and talk with me in regard to the round and flat world. I sent him a message that when Christ gave my commission to do the work He had placed upon me, the flat or round world was not included in the message; the Lord had taken care of His house, His world here below, better than any human agency could care for it, and until the message came from the Lord, silence was eloquence upon that question. {21MR 414.2, 1904}

In light of this statement, neither side is to employ Sister White's name to advance their case, since she affirms that the shape of the Earth was not included in the message, or commission, God had given her.

Essentially, Sister White states that God had not moved upon her to reveal the truth on this subject. Rather, along with the rest of the church, she was to remain silent upon the question "until the message came from the Lord". At no point did she afterward claim to have received this message.

Furthermore, for each occasion that Sister White referred to the Earth as a globe, her aim was to illustrate spiritual principles; uphold God's sustaining and creative power; or demonstrate the abiding nature of His law. While she drew these object lessons from science as she understood it, her intention was

not to answer the question of whether the Earth was flat or spherical. This is proven by the fact that when confronted with the issue directly (as in the aforementioned quotation), her position was simply that it should be left alone. She declared: "Let those who are presenting theories as to whether the Earth is round or flat, leave this question, for God has not given it to them to solve." {21MR 419.6} Interestingly, Sister White never called the flat-earth teaching error. She simply maintained: "We have nought to do with the question whether this world is round or flat." {Manuscript 145, 1904}

It is crucial to understand this principle. If we are to seek counsel from Sister White's writings on this issue, we must use statements where she addresses the round or flat-earth debate as the subject matter. In these statements, as we have already seen, her position was that we should leave the issue alone, and further, that "the flat or round world was not included in the message" she was given.

Another point to consider is that Sister White never once rebuked a man by the name of Alexander Gleason. Gleason is best known for his map of the flat Earth which is still commonly used today. Gleason was also a leader in the New York conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and is said to have started the church in Buffalo, New York. In 1890, he published a book titled: *Is the Bible from Heaven? Is the Earth a Globe?* This book was revised in 1893 and presents the geocentric model of a flat Earth.

Why is it that during this time, there is not a word from Sister White declaring the flat-earth message

to be error? If God had shown her that it was in fact erroneous, one would expect her to have rebuked Gleason. And yet she never did. This is a question which all must consider, especially those who seek to use the Spirit of Prophecy to overrule the possibility of a flat Earth. For instance, Sister White heavily rebuked John Harvey Kellogg for his book, *The Living Temple*, when it was published in 1903, and again when it was revised. She also heavily rebuked the pastors and elders of the Indianapolis conference who believed in holy-flesh doctrine. She similarly rebuked Uriah Smith and Elder Daniells as well as many others for their rejection and criticism of the 1888 message.

Why then, when Sister White was informed by letters from New York that there were many believing and preaching the flat Earth, did she not condemn their teaching as error? She only counselled them to leave the question alone, and to focus on the work God had given the church to do. This can be seen in the following address from Sister White to Brother Brown:

I learn by letters from New York that Brother Brown has accepted and is now preaching the flat world theory. Is it possible that this theory has been brought by Brother Wilcox from England and that you have accepted it and are teaching it? My brother, our work is to teach the third angel's message. Stick to the message...Do not, my brother, become entangled with ideas that have no connection with the work for this time. {21MR 412.6, 413.1}

Here was a perfect opportunity for the prophetess to lay this belief to rest, just as she would soon do with the holy-flesh movement and the doctrine of pantheism. The fact is that when it came to the flat Earth, Sister White never once condemned the teaching as error. She simply counselled the brethren to remain focused upon the work which God had given them to do "for this time", "until the message came from the Lord".

I don't deny that it was God's providence which led Sister White to silence this question in her day. However, Sister White plainly declared that we are to remain silent "until" the message comes from the Lord. Thus, the topic was open to be revisited in the future if the Lord revealed the truth concerning it. Today, this message is certainly being revived, and it

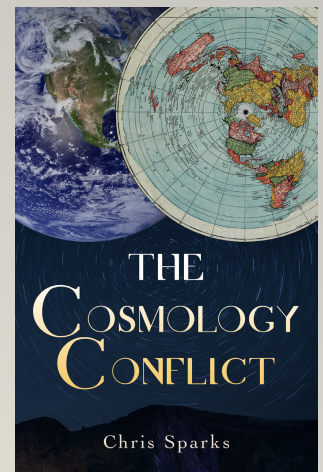
bears a powerful connection with the work for our time.

Since the passing of Sister White, false scientific theories such as evolution and the big bang have taken deep root. Unlike the religious climate of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, contemporary society is largely atheistic and many are skeptical of the Bible.

Would not the Lord have reserved a revelation to challenge this satanic paradigm? It makes sense that our heavenly Father would wait for Satan to more fully develop his 'scientific' delusion before playing the trump card, and thus instruct Sister White to apply the brakes on the message in her day.

But now, through the geocentric creation message, men and women are being drawn to the Bible who were previously skeptics and unbelievers. After seeing through the lies of NASA and studying the scientific evidence for a geocentric model, these truth-seekers have discovered that the Bible supports the observable reality of a motionless, flat Earth. This inevitably draws them towards the kindred truths of a literal six-day creation, and the day of rest instituted in memorial of it.

I therefore invite you to weigh up the Biblical evidence and trace the dark history of heliocentrism in my book, *The Cosmology Conflict*. For all must decide for themselves: is the message of a geocentric creation coming from the Lord?



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