

# The Alpha and Omega of Apostasy

Recently I have heard people attaching the term, “alpha of apostasy,” to all kinds of things. Some affix it to the vaccine statements; others affix it to the doctrine of the “Trinity.” When that term is stripped of its original context, it can apply to whatever someone wants it to apply to. I don’t care what peoples’ opinions on the subject are, and neither should you. What was Ellen White speaking about when she used the term, “Alpha of Apostasy”?

Closely linked with this idea I have seen the term, “First principles of present Truth.” Repeated several times, this undoubtedly refers to the principles in Hebrews 6 as discovered shortly after 1844. Of course this is expanded upon as the Bible often expands upon subjects in other places. These doctrines have come to us as the 28 fundamental beliefs. Though watered down, a sincere study of them will point us to the truths of this time. These are: the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, righteousness by faith and sanctification (seen in Revelation 14), state of the dead, hellfire, the Second Coming and the Spirit of Prophecy. Shortly, we will discuss another one that is not listed here.

Please note the meaning of the word personality has changed in the last 75 years, in Ellen Whites time it meant: “*the quality or fact of being a person as distinct from a thing or animal.*”

## The History of the Alpha

Here is a brief description of events from James and Ellen White’s grandson in his book, *The early Elmshaven years, chapter 21*:

“To understand better the crisis that faced the church in the Kellogg controversy, it is necessary to review the events that preceded the 1903 General Conference and the move to Washington, D.C.

“The medical work in which Seventh-day Adventists were engaged, which later came to be known as the medical missionary work, was in God’s providence instituted as a means of bringing relief to the sick and of acquainting them with the Saviour and preparing them to meet Christ at His second coming. This work was to be the right arm of the message. It was a means of contacting and reaching people effectively.

“It is not strange, then, that the great adversary of all truth, one who had declared war against God and His people, should attempt to nullify [to make of no value or effectiveness] the effectiveness of this ministry. Preceding chapters have noted the steps taken by Dr. Kellogg to wrest the medical work from the control of the church leaders and form it into a great non-denominational Christian work.

“There is no question that Dr. Kellogg was an unselfish, dedicated, much-loved man. He was a

generous, great man. But it was largely (yet not altogether) through Dr. John Harvey Kellogg that the great adversary introduced into the ranks of Seventh-day Adventists the seeds of error in the form of so-called new light, just at a time when the medical work was at its height.

“Pantheism is the term used to designate the strange new teachings that were being introduced. Pantheism pictures God not as a great personal Being, but a mysterious essence—an impersonal influence pervading all nature. God is seen in all nature—in trees, flowers, sunshine, air, and human beings. The power of God in nature is confused with the personality of God.

“As is so often the case with misleading teachings, it came to the ranks of Seventh-day Adventists subtly [not immediately obvious or recognized], as new, advanced truth. At first it was not discerned as a threat to the church. Dr. Kellogg had toyed with these concepts before James White’s death in 1881, and considering it “great light,” had discussed it with Ellen White. ‘Those theories are wrong,’ she told him. ‘I have met them before.’ He seemed dazed as she showed him the outcome of espousing such a philosophy. She then admonished, ‘Never teach such theories in our institutions; do not present them to the people.’”—Arthur L. White, 1905, quoted from *5 Biography, The Early Elmshaven Years, 280-281.*

The reference that she makes to her past experience is recorded better here:

“Finally my son said to me, ‘Mother, you ought to read at least some parts of the book, that you may see whether they are in harmony with the light that God has given you.’ He sat down beside me, and together we read the preface, and most of the first chapter, and also paragraphs in other chapters. As we read, I recognized the very sentiments against which I had been bidden to speak in warning during the early days of my public labors. When I first left the State of Maine, it was to go through Vermont and Massachusetts, to bear a testimony against these sentiments. *Living Temple* contains the alpha of these theories. I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people. I knew that I must warn our brethren and sisters not to enter into controversy over the presence and personality of God. The statements made in *Living Temple* in regard to this point are incorrect. The scripture, used to substantiate the doctrine there set forth, is scripture misapplied.”—*I Selected Messages, 203.2*

Here, we clearly see that the alpha of apostasy is the beginning of some fanaticism she saw when she was 17. In her early years, she confronted the omega—the

inevitable result of Kellogg's pantheistic views. (More on this later.)

To protect God's people, she gave the warning:

"I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people. I knew that I must warn our brethren and sisters not to enter into controversy over the presence and personality of God."—*1 Selected Messages, 203.*

Part of the reason for this warning is the nature of controversy; mankind cannot argue with Satan and win. He deceived 1/3 of the angels in heaven, and mankind was made lower than angels. Part of it was the nature of the subject:

"Few can discern the result of entertaining the sophistries advocated by some at this time. But the Lord has lifted the curtain, and has shown me the results that would follow. The spiritualistic theories regarding the personality of God, followed to their logical conclusion, sweep away the whole Christian economy. They estimate as nothing the light that Christ came from heaven to give John to give to his people. They teach that the scenes just before us are not of sufficient importance to be given special attention. They make of no affect the truth of heavenly origin, and rob the people of God of their past experience, giving them instead a false science."—*1 Selected Messages, 203-204.*

After the General conference of 1901, Elder Daniels encountered these views and began to oppose them:

"As Elder Daniels took up residence in Battle Creek as the leader of the church following the General Conference of 1901, he found these teachings rampant. For years he had been more or less isolated in Australia. He was amazed to hear the talk of God in flowers, in trees, in mankind. The expression was constantly heard: The acorn falls to the ground and a tree springs up. It was argued that one must say there is a tree maker in the tree. It was declared that the Creator, whatever He might be like, was in the things that were made; and therefore, man must look within for his maker and his God. And some boldly said that there is no great Being sitting on the throne in heaven, but God is in all nature."—*Arthur L. White, quoted from 5 Biography, The Early Elmhaven Years, 287.*

A sample of the teachings that were being shared has been added, so you can see the dangers of the logic involved; we will surely meet it soon.

"Where is God?" I was asked. I would naturally say, He is in heaven; there the Bible pictures the throne of God, all the heavenly beings at His command as messengers between heaven and earth. But I was told that God was in the grass and plants and in the trees....

"Where is heaven?" I was asked. I had my idea of the center of the universe, with heaven and the throne of God in the midst, but disclaimed any attempt to fix the center of the universe astronomically. But I was urged to understand that heaven is where God is, and God is everywhere—in the grass, in the trees, in all creation. There was no place in the scheme of things for angels going between heaven and earth, for heaven was here and everywhere. The cleansing of

the Sanctuary that we taught about was not something in far away heaven. "The sin is here [Dr. Kellogg said, pointing to his heart], and here is the sanctuary to be cleansed."—*Arthur L. White, quoted from 5 Biography, The Early Elmhaven Years, 289-290.*

Testifying against these views Ellen White said:

"You are not definitely clear on the personality of God, which is everything to us as a people. You have virtually destroyed the Lord God Himself."—*Arthur L. White, quoted from 5 Biography, The Early Elmhaven Years, 292.4.*

Here, we find another foundational doctrine—the personality of God. Kellogg's book expressed his views on God the Father. These views were met time and time again by Ellen White and resisted by others until Kellogg changed his position and made a second edition of his book:

"He [Kellogg] then stated that his former views regarding the trinity had stood in his way of making a clear and absolutely correct statement: but that within a short time he had come to believe in the trinity, and could now see pretty clearly where all the difficulty was, and believed that he could clear the matter up satisfactorily. He told me that he now believed in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and his view was that it was God the Holy Ghost, and not God the Father, that filled all space, and every living thing."—*A.G. Daniells' October 29, 1903, letter to W.C. White.*

Kellogg accepted the Catholic "trinity" merely so he could apply his views to the Holy Spirit instead of the Father, thinking this would make his errors acceptable. Upon reception of this letter, it was shortly passed to Ellen White, who read it and, in 1903, wrote Letters 253 and 253a, in response. She stated:

"I must tell you that your ideas in regard to some things have been decidedly wrong. I would that you could see your errors. The book, *Living Temple*, is not to be patched up, a few changes made in it, and then advertised and praised as a valuable production. It would be better to present the physiological parts in another book under another title. When you wrote that book, you were not under the inspiration of God. There was by your side the one who inspired Adam to look at God in a false light. Your whole heart needs to be changed thoroughly and entirely cleansed."—*18 Letters and Manuscripts (1903), Letter 253, par. 1.*

"My brother, when you are tempted to speak of God, where He is, or what He is, remember that on this point silence is eloquence. Take off your shoes from off your feet; for the ground on which you are placing your careless, unsanctified feet is holy ground."—*18 Letters and Manuscripts (1903), Letter 253, par. 19.*

"Pantheistic ideas regarding God in nature are framed by Lucifer, the fallen angel. The strange part of the matter is that these ideas have been accepted by so many as beautiful truth. But that which they think is light will lead them into dense darkness. It is a distinguishing feature of the experience of Seventh-day Adventists to give glory to God. When we give glory to human agencies, when we have unlimited confidence in man, speaking of the excellence that we suppose him to possess, we worship we know not what. Let God be

exalted. Let frail, erring human beings humble themselves before Him.”—*18 Letters and Manuscripts (1903), Letter 253a, par. 14.*

### The Omega

Ellen White clearly understood that God is a person (whether Father, Son, or Holy Spirit), not a force. To identify God as a force is offensive to God and opposed to our historic faith. A pillar of our faith is to fear God, glorify, and worship Him. If we misunderstand God we worship what we know not.

“The Lord presented this matter to me, revealing that the result of such teaching was a subtle beguiling of the mind, and the doctor himself did not foresee this result of his extreme views, in regard to God in nature.... I told him that the Lord was greatly dishonored by being thus represented, and that such ideas would lead the people into spiritualism.”—*Arthur L. White, 5 Biography, The Early Elmshaven Years, 302-303.*

“I have seen the results of these fanciful views of God, in apostasy, spiritualism, free loveism. The free love tendencies of these teachings were so concealed that it was difficult to present them in their real character. Until the Lord presented it to me, I knew not what to call it, but I was instructed to call it unholy spiritual love.”—*Arthur L. White, 5 Biography, The Early Elmshaven Years, 303.*

In order to understand what exactly justifies these statements about “free love,” we go to the omega of apostasy—the results that Ellen White saw. Read, again, the quote near the end of page one: *1 Selected Messages, 203.2*. A reference is made to a past experience, and then Ellen White states, “*Living Temple* contains the alpha of these theories.”

She wrote a section in *Testimonies, Volume 8*, (called *The essential Knowledge*) that specifically dealt with Kellogg’s errors in regard to the presence and location of God. In it, she records the experience mentioned:

“After the passing of the time in 1844, we had fanaticism of every kind to meet. Testimonies of reproof were given me to bear to some holding spiritualistic theories.

“There were those who were active in disseminating false ideas in regard to God. Light was given me that these men were making the truth of no effect by their false teachings. I was instructed that they were misleading souls by presenting speculative theories regarding God.

“I went to the place where they were and opened before them the nature of their work. The Lord gave me strength to lay plainly before them their danger. Among other views they held that those who were once sanctified could not sin. Their false teaching was working great harm to themselves and to others. They were gaining a spiritualistic power over those who could not see the evil of these beautifully clothed theories. The doctrine that all were holy had led to the belief that the affections of the sanctified would never lead astray. The result of this belief was the fulfillment of the evil desires of hearts that, though professedly sanctified, were far from purity of thought and life.

“Ungodly teaching is followed by sinful practice. It is the seducing bait of the father of lies and results in the impenitence of self-satisfied impurity.

“This is only one of the instances in which I was called upon to rebuke those who were presenting the doctrine of an impersonal (not existing as a person; having no personality) God pervading all nature and similar errors.”—*8 Testimonies, 292-293.*

In another place she says:

“Before I was 17 years old, I had to bear my testimony against them [sentiments regarding God, such as are found in the *Living Temple*] before large companies. In New Hampshire, two prominent men, who profess to believe in the Lord’s soon coming, we’re active in disseminating ideas regarding God, similar to those presented in the *Living Temple.*”—*Arthur L. White, 5 Biography, The Early Elmshaven Years, 304.*

### Why Free-Lovism?

In order to understand this concept, one must follow this idea to its conclusion. Since Kellogg changed his views to regard the Holy Spirit not as a being but as the power that pervades all things, we will follow his logic the best we can. As previously mentioned, a tree has the ability to create; so it is assumed a tree maker (God, the Holy Spirit) is in the tree. Divinity is ascribed to the power of God rather than the person of God. Logically, if God was an essence inside man, man would only need to look inwardly in order to see God. How can God be worshiped? It is the Creator God, who is worshiped by imitation. How is He imitated? By creating. Since God is an essence that influences man, feelings are God’s influence; thus lusts are not the carnal nature, but the Spirit of God—prompting man to worship Him. To follow the heart is to follow God. Every desire to create is a chance to worship God; so opportunities to “worship” with members of the opposite gender are sought. Very quickly, we went from Christianity to Satanism. This is only the logical conclusion; and it is the omega of apostasy that Ellen White rebuked. It’s also known as the holy flesh movement or perfectionism, or more commonly the ideas are reflected in spiritualism, meditative practices, or basic pagan idolatry.

Just look at the reasoning of Waggoner, who fell into this deception:

“What is it that gives us life, no matter who we are? It is the life of God. How many lives are there in the universe? There is but one life, and that is the life of God. What is the life of God given to us for? That we may live it. And how long is the life of God to endure? Through eternity. What does He let us have this life for? and why does He bear it with us, and with this whole world? That we may take the life that He has already given, and know that it is eternal life.”—*Arthur L. White, 5 Biography, The Early Elmshaven Years, 283.5.*

“He [Waggoner] was asked by someone in the audience, ‘Do you ever expect to be sick?’

“He answered, ‘No; I expect to live forever’ ”—*Arthur L. White, 5 Biography, The Early Elmshaven Years, 283, pars. 6-7.*

4 Waggoner eventually became interested in a “spiritual wife.” He called his relations “spiritual affinity” which Ellen White denounced, though not calling him by name:

“If the society of a man of impure mind and licentious habits is chosen in preference to that of the virtuous and pure, it is a sure indication that the tastes and inclinations harmonize, that a low level of morals is reached. This level is called by these deceived, infatuated souls, a high and holy affinity of spirit—a spiritual harmony. But the apostle terms it “spiritual wickedness in high places,” against which we are to institute a vigorous warfare.

When the deceiver commences his work of deception, he frequently finds dissimilarity of tastes and habits, but by great pretensions to godliness he gains the confidence, and when this is done, his wily, deceptive power is exercised in his own way, to carry out his devices. By associating with this dangerous element, women become accustomed to breathe the atmosphere of impurity and almost insensibly become permeated with the same spirit. Their identity is lost; they become the shadow of their seducer.” —*Testimonies Volume 5, 143*

### Conclusion

It is not against Scripture to believe that God, through the person of the Holy Spirit, dwells in us:

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”—Colossians 1:27.

“And they glorified God in me.”—*Galatians 1:24*. (some translations read otherwise but this is the correct translation of the Greek.)

“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”—*John 14:16-17*.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”—*1 Corinthians 6:19*.

If this seems awfully close to the deceptions of the *Living Temple*, you would be correct. In this matter, Sister White says:

“We need not the mysticism that is in this book (*The living Temple*). Those who entertain these sophistries will soon find themselves in a position where the enemy can talk with them and lead them away from God. It is represented to me that the writer of this book is on a false track. He has lost sight of the distinguishing truths for this time. He knows not whither [where] his steps are tending. The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error.” —*1 Selected Messages, 202*.

The sophistries of Satan are extremely subtle. Spiritualism took on the appearance of truth by misapplying the writings of Ellen White and Scripture to seemingly support it.

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”—*2 Corinthians 11:14*.

“The theory that God is an essence pervading all nature is received by many who profess to believe the Scriptures; but, however beautifully clothed, this theory is a most dangerous deception. It misrepresents God and is a dishonor to His greatness and majesty. And it surely tends not only to mislead, but to debase men. Darkness is its element, sensuality its sphere. ...These theories, followed to their logical conclusion, sweep away the whole Christian economy. They do away with the necessity for the atonement and make man his own savior.”—*The Ministry of Healing, 428*.

“As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures; so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths.... By spiritualism, multitudes are taught to believe that desire is the highest law, that license is liberty, and that man is accountable only to himself.”—*The Acts of the Apostles, 474*.

The alpha of apostasy is the belief that God, be it Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, is not a person but a power, a feeling, an impulse, an essence, etc. Because the power of God can be clearly seen in nature, the presence of God is then assumed to be in nature too. Thus nature becomes God and anything that can reproduce becomes God. The Omega is the sanctification of sin, a belief that the feelings and corrupt thoughts proceeding from a carnal mind are the path to enlightenment and holiness. This leads into sensualism, self-worship, and every conceivable form of evil. Hopefully, this cleared up any misunderstandings about the Alpha and Omega of apostasy. Any application of that term to something else is mere speculation that ignores the plain statement in 1 Selected Messages 203. Watch out for people who deny the person-hood of the Holy Spirit, they are on a dangerous course.

*For a finished work*



**Jonathan Taylor**

*Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35*