

Some Highlights of the Life of **Rachel Oakes Preston** (1809-1868) ([www.APLib.org](http://www.APLib.org))

See "An Undaunted Woman" *Lest We Forget*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 4, 5

Date	Age	Event
1809	0	Born in Vernon, Vermont, Rachel Delight Harris
1824?	15	Marriage to Amory Oakes
1825?	16	Birth of her daughter Delight
1826	17	Conversion; soon afterwards became a Methodist

Moved with husband to Verona, New York.

1837	28	Became interested in seventh-day Sabbath
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Despite the opposition of her husband and the Methodist minister, accepted and began keeping the Sabbath, and joined the Seventh Day Baptist church of Vernon, New York.

1843	34	Daughter Delight accepted a teaching position at Washington, New Hampshire (later married Cyrus Farnsworth, William's younger brother, June 1847; she joined the Sabbath-keeping Adventists)
1844	35	Early in the year moved to Washington, New Hampshire, now a widow. While attending the Washington, New Hampshire, Christian Church she confronted the visiting minister, Frederick Wheeler, who had admonished the congregation of advent believers during a communion service to keep all the ten commandments <sup>1</sup>

"I want to tell you that you had better set that communion table back and put the cloth over it, until you begin to keep the commandments of God. You yourself constantly break one of them! You observe the pope's Sunday instead of the Lord's Sabbath!"<sup>2</sup> By March Wheeler was convinced of the Sabbath and began preaching it.

In Washington, New Hampshire Rachel met and married her second husband, Nathan Preston, and they later moved to Vernon, Vermont, her birthplace.

1855/09/18	46	A response was published to Frederick Wheeler was had inquired of the <i>Review</i> if they has received any correspondence from Rachel Preston
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[*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* would address individuals in it "Business" column:]

F. WHEELER:- We have not received any letter from Rachel Preston. {September 18, 1855 JWe, ARSH 48.23}

"... Hearing much said against Bro. and Sr. White, at different times, by individuals who were disaffected in consequence of reproof which they needed, and who sought to relive their minds by poisoning others, she became cold in religion, and prejudiced to some extent against the Testimonies, having never seen Bro and Sr. White. But we were happy to learn that after reading Testimony No. 13<sup>31</sup> (which some unknown friend in kindness had sent them), her mind underwent a decided change. Her heart was made to rejoice, a short time before her death, in hearing of the result of the Washington meeting, at the recent visit of Bro. and Sr. White. She expressed her willingness to die, and expressions like the following were among her last: 'Jesus is good.' 'Jesus is my friend.'"<sup>4</sup>

1863	54	Became an invalid
1868/02/01	59	Died

*Line of Sabbath truth:*

Rachel Preston to	Frederick Wheeler (March 1844) to	T. M. Preble (August 1844; wrote <i>Hope of Israel</i> February 1845) to	Joseph Bates (1845) to	James and Ellen White (fall 1846)
	William Farnsworth (January 1845)		J. N. Andrews (1845) to	Hiram Edson (fall 1846)
				J. N. Loughborough (September 1852)

Preble's *Hope of Israel*

Wishing for the truth on all subjects connected with Christ's coming, I would present a few thoughts on the Sabbath....

[Quotes William Miller on the Sabbath:] Its being contained in the ten commands, written by the finger of God, on both tables of the testimony, graven on stone, to be a sign forever, and a perpetual covenant, proves, in my

opinion, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that it is as binding upon the christian church as upon the Jewish, and in the same manner, and for the same reasons. {1842 WiM, MWV1 157.2}

[Miller then repudiated keeping the seventh of the week on two reasons, Christ's resurrection and meeting with his disciples on the first day, and "rest remaining" pointing to the saints' rest after their resurrection]

[Preble's response:] The sentiments expressed in the above extract, I believe to be true, except the closing part where it is said "The Sabbath which remains is to be kept on the first day of every week, as a perpetual sign," etc. Now, I ask, how can this be? If we keep the first day as "a sign," I do not see how we can have our thousand years' rest in the new earth, till the eighth thousand years, as the first day would be the eighth, reckoning in successive order from creation. But we all as advent believers, have, and do still expect our rest in the seventh thousand years. Therefore I think we should keep the "seventh day" as "a sign," "according to the commandment." I know the reasons which are given in favor of keeping the first day, and they once satisfied me, but fail to do it now, after a thorough examination of the subject. {1845 TMP, TSSD 5.1}

A word now in relation to the history. As far as I have been able to examine, during the last six months, since I became convicted on this point, I find the following to be true. The disciples evidently kept the first day of the week as a *festival*, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. But never as *the Sabbath*. A controversy however commenced toward the close of the first century to see whether both days would be kept, or only one; and if one should be given up, which one, the first day, or the seventh. This controversy increased century after century till A. D. 603, when *Pope Gregory* passed a law abolishing the *seventh day Sabbath*, and establishing the first day. {1845 TMP, TSSD 9.4}

[He also referenced Eusebius, John Calvin, and other historical sources on the change of the Sabbath.]

Thus we see Dan. vii. 25 fulfilled, the "little horn" changing "times and laws." Therefore it appears to me that all who keep the first day of the week for "*the Sabbath*," are *Pope's Sunday Keepers!!* and God's Sabbath breakers!!! {1845 TMP, TSSD 10.3}

Truth is what I am after, and if I had but one day on this earth to spend, I would give up error for truth as soon as I could see it. May the Lord give us wisdom, and help us to keep all "His commandments that we may have right to the tree of live." Rev. xxii. 14 {1845 TMP, TSSD 10.4}

[James White recounting the introduction of the Sabbath truth (in *Life Incidents*, 1868):]

As early as 1844, sister Preston, a Seventh-day Baptist, who was a believer in the soon coming of Christ, introduced the Sabbath to the Adventists of Washington, N.H., and made a good impression. With the help of the publications of her people, and the blessing of God, about forty embraced the Sabbath. The truth on this subject reached other points in New Hampshire. About that time Elder T.M. Preble embraced the Sabbath, and began to teach it. He called the attention of Adventists to the question, by a pamphlet on the subject, dated February 13, 1845. After showing the claims of the Bible Sabbath, and the fact that it was changed to Sunday by the Papacy, he said; "Thus we see Dan.vii,25, fulfilled, the little horn changing times and laws. Therefore it appears to me that all who keep the first day for the Sabbath, are the Pope's Sunday-keepers, and God's Sabbath breakers." But Elder Preble, not seeing the Sabbath reform under the message of the third angel, and that in the ripening of the harvest of the earth, the Sabbath was to be a test, continued his ministerial labors in connection with those who bitterly opposed it. He soon lost his interest in the subject, and has since become one of its bitterest opposers. The same is true of Elder J.B. Cook, and a few other Advent ministers, who at a later point of time, embraced the Sabbath and abandoned it. Elder Preble had, however, called the attention of Adventists to this subject, and several in different parts of New England embraced the Sabbath, whose interest in it did not prove as transient as his had been. {1868 JW, LIFIN 268.1}

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#### Footnotes

1. The date Rachel moved to Washington, her marital status at the time, and when she introduced the Adventists to the Sabbath differ between the 1868 obituary by S. N. Haskell (*Review and Herald*, March 3, 1868, p. 14, which states she moved to Washington, New Hampshire with her husband around 1841, and introduced the Sabbath in 1844 after the passing of the time), and the *Lest We Forget* article on her, taken from other sources.

2. Maxwell, C. M., *Tell It to the World*, p. 68; Spalding, A. W., *Captains of the Host*, p. 107

3. Volume 1 of the *Testimonies for the Church* contains No. 1-14 of the individually published Testimonies; No. 13 was published after October 21, 1867; see 1T630.1

4. S. N. Haskell (obituary, *Review and Herald*, March 3, 1868, p. 14