

KEY DOCTRINAL COMPARISONS

**STATEMENTS of BELIEF
1872 - 1980**

Adventist Laymen's Foundation
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(Second Printing)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In this brochure and on the Cassette tape which accompanies it, we share a comparative analysis of key doctrines as presented in Statements of Belief from 1872 to the present, 1980.

In the first section we note how we have viewed and presently view the Holy Scriptures; and then placed immediately after in the second section the statements regarding the Spirit of Prophecy. How the statements relative to the Bible read, govern what can be said about the writings of Ellen G. White. However much we profess to adhere to the ringing challenge of William Chillingworth - "The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants!" - the credal statement voted at the 1980 General Conference Session declares the writings of Ellen G. White to be "a continuing and authoritative source of truth." (GC Bulletin, #9, p. 25) No previous statement ever assigned such authority to the writings of Ellen G. White.

A serious study of the comparison of the other key doctrines as given on the following pages will also be thought provoking. For example, in the voted Dallas Statement, we read concerning the Incarnation - "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ." How do we harmonize this with the concepts in all previous statements that Jesus Christ "while retaining His divine nature, . . . took upon Himself the nature of the human family.?"

We should write a word about our sources. For past "Statements of Belief," we have relied heavily on the Yearbook. The first Yearbook resulted from an action of the General Conference Committee in December, 1882, and when published, contained "the statistics of our denomination, the proceedings of our General Conference, T. and M. [Tract and Missionary] Society, and other associations, the financial condition of our institutions, our General and State Conference constitutions, a good calender, and full directories of all Conferences and various societies throughout the country." (Quoted in SDA Encyclopedia, Rev. Edition, p. 1336) Such made the Yearbook an authoritative voice of the Church's position and standing. A break occurred in the publication of the Yearbook from 1895-1903. During these years it was replaced by the General Conference Bulletins. In 1889, 1905, 1907-1914, the Yearbook contained a section devoted to "Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists." This statement of beliefs was prefaced by the comment:

Seventh-day Adventists have no creed but the Bible; but they hold to certain well-defined points of faith, for which they feel prepared to give a reason 'to every man that asketh' them. The following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principle features of their religious faith, upon which there is, so far as is known, entire unanimity throughout the body." (1889 Yearbook, p. 147)

The next Statement of Beliefs to appear in the Yearbook was in 1931, but this was a new statement and revised.

It is interesting to observe that the first Yearbook to contain a Statement of Beliefs was for the year following the 1888 General Conference. It is also noteworthy that no statement appeared again till the time of the Alpha apostasy (circa, 1905) and Special Testimonies, Series B, #2 & 7, were published. It was during this period - 1890-1904 - that a divergent statement was printed in the Membership Directory of the headquarters church at Battle Creek; and the Holy Flesh Movement, which also espoused divergent doctrines, engulfed the Indiana Conference. Then

when the Statement again appeared in the 1905 Yearbook, it was continued only up to the death of Ellen G. White. In other words, we never even exemplified the experience of ancient Israel who "served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that over lived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that He had done for Israel." (Joshua 24:31)

Section 1 - THE BIBLE

1872 Tract; 1874 Signs of the Times (ST) Editorial; 1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbooks: (Beginning with the 1908 Yearbook, a notation was included which read - "By the late Uriah Smith.")

"III. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of His will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

1894 - Membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Battle Creek:

"That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and contain a revelation of His will to man, and are an infallible rule of faith and practice."

1931 Yearbook:

"1. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, contain an all-sufficient revelation of His will to man, and are the only unerring rule of faith and practice."

1979 - Annual Council Recommended Statements:

"That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through 'holy men of God' who spake and wrote as they were 'moved by the Holy Spirit.' These Scriptures are the all-sufficient, authoritative, and effective revelation of His gracious purpose and will. They are the source of all true doctrine and the only unerring standard of faith and practice." 1

1980 - Statement given to Delegates, 1980, Dallas, Texas, GC Session.

"The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. These Scriptures are the living, all-sufficient, trustworthy and authoritative revelation of God's gracious purpose and will. They are the source of all true doctrine and the only infallible standard of faith and practice."

1980 - Voted "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists":

"The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history." 2

Section 2 - THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

1872 Tract; 1874 ST Editorial; 1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbooks:

"That the Spirit of God was promised to manifest itself in the church through certain gifts, enumerated in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4; that these gifts are not designated to supercede, or to take the place of the Bible, which is sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, any more than the Bible can take the place of the Holy Spirit; that in specifying the various channels of its operation, that Spirit has simply made provision for its own existence and presence with the people of God to the end of time, to lead to an understanding of that word which it had inspired, to convince of sin, and work a transformation in the heart and life; and that those who deny to the Spirit its place and operation do plainly deny that part of the Bible which assigns to it this work and position."

1894 - Battle Creek Church Statement

"That the subject of spiritual gifts is a doctrine clearly taught in the Scriptures, being repeatedly set forth in various books of the Old and New Testaments; and we learn from history that the gifts have continued all along the gospel dispensation; and there is the strongest evidence that the spirit of prophecy has been manifested among those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus during the last half century."

1931 Yearbook:

"That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. These gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ."

1950 - General Conference Session added the following two sentences to the Statement as found in the 1931 Yearbook:

"That the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. The remnant church recognizes that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White."

1979 - Annual Council Recommended Statements:

"14. That God has placed in His church spiritual gifts, which are 'inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills.' These gifts will continue in the Church to equip the saints for ministry, to build up the body of Christ, and to develop the unity of the faith.

"15. That the presence of the spiritual gift of prophecy is an identifying mark of the remnant Church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger she provided guidance to the Church, instruction in the Scriptures, and counsel for spiritual growth. Her writings uplift the Scriptures as the standard of faith and practice, and function as a continuing source of divine counsel."¹

1980 - Given to Delegates, Dallas Session:

"17. The presence of the gift of prophecy, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, is an identifying mark of the remnant Church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger she provided guidance to the Church, instruction in the Scriptures, and counsel for spiritual growth. Her writings, which uplift the Scriptures as the ultimate standard of faith and practice, provide a continuing source of truth and divine counsel."

1980 - Voted

"One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift in an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth and provide of the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested."²

Section 3 - THE GODHEAD

1872 Tract; 1874 ST Editorial; 1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbooks; 1894 Battle Creek Church Statement:

"That there is one God, a personal, spiritual Being, the Creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit.

"That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the One by whom He created all things, and by whom they do consist. . ."

1931 Yearbook:

"That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption.

"That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father."

1979 - Annual Council Recommended Statement:

"2. THE TRINITY - That there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a self-existing Unity in Trinity. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, transcendent and immanent, the absolute Reality whose infinite and personal being is a mystery forever beyond human comprehension.

"3. GOD THE FATHER - That God the eternal Father is the Creator, the ultimate Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all that is. He is infinite and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

"4. GOD THE SON - That God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. . .

"5. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT - That God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture and filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts us, renews and transforms us into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with us, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and leads into all truth."¹

1980 - Given to Delegates, Dallas Session:

"2. THE GODHEAD OR TRINITY - There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of Three co-eternal Persons, the Godhead or Trinity. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever present, above all, through all and in all. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He acts in and through nature and history. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.

"3. THE FATHER - God the eternal Father is the Creator, the ultimate Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all Creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and power exhibited in the Son and Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father.

"4. THE SON - God the eternal Son is He through whom all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world judged. . .

"5. THE HOLY SPIRIT - God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in creation, and the incarnation. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with us, He is active in redemption. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. He extends spiritual gifts to the Church, empowers her to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with Scripture leads her into all truth."

1980 - Voted

"2. THE TRINITY - There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.

"3. THE FATHER - God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and power exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father.

"4. THE SON - God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. . .

"5. THE HOLY SPIRIT - God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God, Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads into all truth." 2

Section 4 - THE INCARNATION

1872 Tract; 1874 ST Editorial; 1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbooks:

"That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father. . . that He took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that He dwelt among men, full of grace and truth, lived our example. . ."

1894 - Battle Creek Church Statement:

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, . . . that He took of him the nature of man, for the redemption of our fallen race; that He dwelt among men, full of grace and truth, lived our example. . ."

1931 Yearbook:

"That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father. While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on earth as a man, exemplified in His life as our example the principles of righteousness, . . ."

1979 - Annual Council Recommended Statement:

"4. GOD THE SON - That God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. . . Forever truly God, He became truly man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a man, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God."¹

1980 - Given to Delegates, Dallas Session:

"4. THE SON - Forever truly God, He became truly man, the man Jesus, the Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. As our Example, He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, yet without sin. He perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God."

1980 - Voted:

"4. THE SON - God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. . . Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God."²

"Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example." ²

Section 5 - THE ATONEMENT

1872 Tract; 1874 ST Editorial: (Elder James White)

"That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that He . . . died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only Mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, with His own blood, He makes the atonement for our sins; which atonement, so far from being made on the cross, which was but the offering of the sacrifice, is the very last portion of His work as priest, according to the example of the Levitical priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in heaven."

1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbooks: (All except the 1889 Yearbook, have the word - "persistently" - substituted for "penitently."* This could be a type-setting error.)

"That there is one Lord Jesus Christ. . . that He . . . died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, through the merits of his shed blood, He secures the

pardon and forgiveness of the sins of all those who penitently* come to Him; and as the closing portion of His work as priest, before He takes His throne as king, He will make the great atonement for the sins of all such, and their sins will then be blotted out and borne away from the sanctuary, as shown in the service of the Levitical priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in heaven."

1894 - Battle Creek Church Statement:

"That there is one Lord Jesus Christ,... that He... died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, through the atoning merits of His blood, He secures the pardon and forgiveness of all who penitently come to God through Him; and as the closing portion of His work as priest before He comes again as King of kings, He will make the final atonement for the sins of all believers, and blot them out, as foreshadowed and prefigured by the Levitical priesthood."

1931 - Yearbook:

"That Jesus Christ... died for our sins on the cross, was raised from the dead, and ascended to the Father, where He ever lives to make intercession for us."

1979 - Annual Council Recommended Statement:

"9. THE DEATH OF CHRIST - That in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, God Himself provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who accept this atonement by faith have eternal life, and the whole creation understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This act of atonement forever established the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sins and forgives it. Thus the death of Christ is a complete and perfect atonement, substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming." 1

1980 - Given to Delegates, Dallas Session:

"In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This act of atonement forever establishes the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, suffering and death, and makes possible personal victory for those who accept the atonement. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and earth will bow."

1980 - Voted:

"In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sins and provides for our forgiveness."

The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow." 2

Section 6 - CHRIST'S HIGH PRIESTLY MINISTRY IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

1872 Tract; 1874 ST Editorial: (Elder James White)

That the sanctuary of the new covenant is the tabernacle of God in heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8, and onward, of which our Lord, as great High Priest, is minister; that this sanctuary is the antitype of the Mosaic tabernacle, and that the priestly work of our Lord, connected therewith, is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation; that this is the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days; what is termed its cleansing being in this case, as in the type, simply the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, to finish the round of service connected therewith, by blotting out and removing from the sanctuary the sins which have been transferred to it by means of the ministration in the first apartment; and that this work, in the antitype, commencing in 1844, occupies a brief but indefinite space, at the conclusion of which the work of mercy for the world is finished."

1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbooks:

"That the sanctuary of the new covenant is the tabernacle of God in heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8 and onward, and of which our Lord, as great high priest, is minister; that this sanctuary is the antitype of the Mosaic tabernacle, and that the priestly work of our Lord, connected therewith, is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation; that this, and not the earth, is the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the two thousand and three hundred days, what is termed the cleansing being in this case, as in the type, simply the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, to finish the round of service connected therewith, by making the atonement and removing from the sanctuary the sins which had been transferred to it by means of the ministration in the first apartment; and that this work in the antitype, beginning in 1844, consists in actually blotting out the sins of believers, and occupies a brief but indefinite space of time, at the conclusion of which the work of mercy for the world will be finished, and the second Advent of Christ will take place."

1894 - Battle Creek Church Statement:

"That the sanctuary of the new covenant is the tabernacle of God in heaven, the antitype of the earthly tabernacle erected by Moses in the wilderness; and that the cleansing of the sanctuary corresponds to the investigative judgment in heaven, which immediately precedes the second coming of Christ."

1931 - Yearbook:

"That the true sanctuary, of which the tabernacle on earth was a type, is the temple of God in heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8 and onward, and of which the Lord Jesus, as our great High Priest, is minister; and that the priestly work of our Lord is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation; that this heavenly sanctuary is the one to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14; its cleansing being, as in the type, a work of judgment, beginning with the entrance of Christ as High Priest upon the judgment

phase of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, foreshadowed in the earthly service of cleansing the sanctuary on the day of atonement. This work of judgment in the heavenly sanctuary began in 1844. Its completion will close human probation."

1979 - Annual Council Recommended Statement:

"That there is in heaven a sanctuary in which Christ ministers in our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension; He entered the second and last phase of this atoning work in 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days. Thus began an investigative judgment, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement."¹

1980 - Given to Delegates, Dallas Session:

"At His ascension Christ was seated in majesty and authority at God's right hand. He watches ceaselessly over the affairs of His Church and of the race for whom He died. As High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary He draws all to Himself and makes available to those who receive Him the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, in 1844, He entered the second and last phase of His ministry: He began a final work of judgment which is a part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, a work typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the day of atonement."

1980 - Voted:

"There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers in our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is a part of the ultimate disposition of all sin typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed by the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus."²

Section 7 - THE PLACE OF THE STUDY OF PROPHECY

1872 Tract; 1874 ST Editorial:

"That the world's history from specified dates in the past, the rise and fall of empires, and the chronological succession of events down to the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom, are outlined in numerous great chain prophecies; and that these prophecies are now all fulfilled except the closing scenes."

1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbooks:

"That prophecy is a part of God's revelation to man; that it is included in that Scripture which is profitable for instruction; that it is designed for us and our children; that so far from being enshrouded in impenetrable mystery, it is that

which especially constitutes the word of God a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; that a blessing is pronounced upon those who study it; and that, consequently, it is to be understood by the people of God sufficiently to show them their position in the world's history and the special duties required at their hands."

1894 - Battle Creek Church Statement:

"That prophecy is a part of God's revelation to man; that a blessing is pronounced on those who study it; and that, as the Saviour himself has called attention to Daniel's prophecy, it is but reasonable to suppose that the prophecies may be understood; that the world's history, the rise and fall of empires, is outlined in numerous great chains of prophecy; and that these prophecies are now all fulfilled except the closing scenes."

1931 - Yearbook: NONE

1979 - Annual Council Recommended Statement: NONE

1980 - Given to Delegates, Dallas Session: NONE

1980 - Voted: NONE

Section 8 - IDENTIFICATION OF "THE MAN OF SIN"

1872 Tract; 1874 ST Editorial; 1889, 1905, 1907-1914 Yearbooks:

"That, as the man of sin, the papacy has thought to change times and laws (the law of God, Daniel 7:25), and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment; we find a prophecy of a reform in this respect to be wrought among believers just before the coming of Christ."

1894 - Battle Creek Church Statement:

"That the man of sin, the papal power, has thought to change times and laws (the law of God), and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment; and that there are numerous prophecies of a great Sabbath reform to be wrought among believers just before the second coming of Christ."

1931 - Yearbook: NONE

1979 - Annual Council Recommended Statement: NONE

1980 - Given to Delegates, Dallas Session: NONE

1980 - Voted: NONE

SOURCES

¹1979 Annual Council Recommended Statement - Adventist Review, February 21, 1980, pp. 8-10 (pp. 40-42, this document)

²1980 Voted Statement of Beliefs, Dallas Session - Adventist Review, May 1, 1980, pp. 23, 25-27 (pp. 36-39, this document)

EARLY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

BY

J. N. D. KELLY, F.B.A.

PRINCIPAL OF ST. EDMUND HALL, OXFORD

REVISED EDITION



1817

Published in San Francisco by

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2. *The Church's Faith*

The doctrine of one God, the Father and creator, formed the background and indisputable premiss of the Church's faith. Inherited from Judaism, it was her bulwark against pagan polytheism, Gnostic emanationism and Marcionite dualism. The problem for theology was to integrate with it, intellectually, the fresh data of the specifically Christian revelation. Reduced to their simplest, these were the convictions that God had made Himself known in the Person of Jesus, the Messiah, raising Him from the dead and offering salvation to men through Him, and that He had poured out His Holy Spirit upon the Church. Even at the New Testament stage ideas about Christ's pre-existence and creative role were beginning to take shape, and a profound, if often obscure, awareness of the activity of the Spirit in the Church was emerging. No steps had been taken so far, however, to work all these complex elements into a coherent whole. The Church had to wait for more than three

¹ *Ib.* 2, 17, 7.

² *Ib.* 2, 1, 5.

³ *Ib.* 4, 2, 5.

hundred years for a final synthesis, for not until the council of Constantinople (381) was the formula of one God existing in three co-equal Persons formally ratified. Tentative theories, however, some more and some less satisfactory, were propounded in the preceding centuries, and it will be the business of this chapter and the next to survey the movement of thought down to the council of Nicaea (325).

S O M U C H I N C O M M O N

Documents of interest in the conversations between
the World Council of Churches and the Seventh-day Adventist Church

World Council of Churches
Geneva, 1973

Constitution and Rules
of the World Council of Churches

REVISED CONSTITUTION AND RULES

A. THE CONSTITUTION

I. Basis

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

II. Membership

Those churches shall be eligible for membership in the World Council of Churches which express their agreement with the Basis upon which the Council is founded and satisfy such criteria as the Assembly or the Central Committee may prescribe. Election to membership shall be by a two-thirds vote of the member churches represented at the Assembly, each member church having one vote. Any application for membership between meetings of the Assembly

1979 Annual Council Statement
Recommended

2. The Trinity

That there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a self-existing Unity in Trinity. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, transcendent and immanent, the absolute Reality whose infinite and personal being is a mystery forever beyond human comprehension. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:6, 7.)

11. The Church

That the Church is the company of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for instruction in the Word, for fellowship, for the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel. The Church

1980 Dallas GC Session
Voted Statement

2. The Trinity

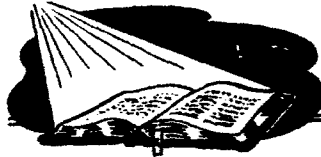
There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of

11. The Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel.

Seventh-day Adventists Answer
QUESTIONS on DOCTRINE

AN EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN MAJOR ASPECTS
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST BELIEF



Prepared by a Representative Group of
Seventh-day Adventist Leaders, Bible Teachers,
and Editors

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When, therefore, one hears an Adventist say, or reads in Adventist literature—even in the writings of Ellen G. White—that Christ is making atonement now,

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it should be understood that we mean simply that Christ is now making application of the benefits of the sacrificial atonement He made on the cross; that He is making it efficacious for us individually, according to our needs and requests. Mrs. White herself, as far back as 1857, clearly explained what she means when she writes of Christ's making atonement for us in His ministry:

The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the *benefits* of His atonement.—*Early Writings*, p. 260. (Italics supplied.)

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all into the holy place (or, holies),* "thus securing an eternal redemption" for us (Heb. 9:12, R.S.V.).

VIII. Redemption Absolute by the Victory of Christ

When He ascended to heaven, He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3; compare Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1). The significance of this is lost if we interpret it merely as a posture. It really expresses honor as represented by authority. Stephen pictured Him not sitting but "standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). While He is our High Priest ministering on our behalf, He is also co-executive with the Father in the government of the universe. How glorious is the thought that the King, who occupies the throne, is also our representative at the court of heaven! This becomes all the more meaningful when we realize that Jesus our surety entered the "holy places," and appeared in the presence of God for us. But it was not with the hope of obtaining something for us at that time, or at some future time. No! He had already obtained it for us on the cross. And now as our High Priest He ministers the virtues of His atoning sacrifice to us. Dr. Thomas Charles Edwards has well remarked:

The sacrifice was made and completed on the Cross, as the victims were slain in the outer court. But it was through the blood of those victims the high-priest had authority to enter the holiest place; and when he had entered, he must sprinkle

*The Greek word here translated "holy place" is *hagia*, and is in the plural form. A correct translation would be "the holies," or "holy places," as in Hebrews 9:24. This entrance, Scripture teaches, occurred at His ascension to glory (Acts 1), having already finished His sacrificial work on the cross. The word translated "obtained," in the Greek is from *heurisko*, and is rendered "found," "procured," "gained," or, in R.S.V., "secured," being nominative, masculine, singular, aorist, middle participle.

DECLARATION

OF THE

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

TAUGHT AND PRACTICED

— BY —

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS.

"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." EPHESIANS 2:20.

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FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.

IN presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject, and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our only object is to meet this necessity.

As Seventh-day Adventists we desire simply that our position shall be understood; and we are the more solicitous for this because there are many who call themselves Adventists who hold views with which we can have no sympathy, some of which, we think, are subversive of the plainest and most important principles set forth in the word of God.

As compared with other Adventists, Seventh-day Adventists differ from one class in believing

in the unconscious state of the dead, and the final destruction of the unrepentant wicked; from another, in believing in the perpetuity of the law of God as summarily contained in the ten commandments, in the operation of the Holy Spirit in the church, and in setting no times for the advent to occur; from all, in the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord, and in many applications of the prophetic scriptures.

With these remarks, we ask the attention of the reader to the following propositions, which aim to be a concise statement of the more prominent features of our faith.

— I —

That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139:7.

— II —

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist; that he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that he dwelt among men full of grace and truth,

lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in Heaven, where, with his own blood he makes atonement for our sins; which atonement so far from being made on the cross, which was but the offering of the sacrifice, is the very last portion of his work as priest, according to the example of the Levitical priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in Heaven. See Lev. 16; Heb. 3: 4, 5; 9: 6, 7; &c.

— III —

That the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of his will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

— IV —

That Baptism is an ordinance of the Christian church, to follow faith and repentance, an ordinance by which we commemorate the resurrection of Christ, as by this act we show our faith in his burial and resurrection, and through that of the resurrection of all the saints at the last day; and that no other mode fitly represents these acts than that which the Scriptures prescribe, namely, immersion. Rom. 6: 3-5; Col. 2: 12.

— V —

That the new birth comprises the entire change necessary to fit us for the kingdom of God, and consists of two parts: first, a moral change, wrought by conversion and a Christian life; second, a physical change at the second coming of Christ, whereby, if dead, we are raised incorruptible, and if living, are changed to immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. John 3: 3, 5; Luke 20: 36.

— VI —

We believe that prophecy is a part of God's revelation to man; that it is included in that scripture which is profitable for instruction, 2 Tim. 3: 16; that it is designed for us and our children: Deut. 29: 29; that so far from being enshrouded in impenetrable mystery, it is that which especially constitutes the word of God a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, Ps. 119: 105, 2 Pet. 2: 19; that a blessing is pronounced upon those who study it, Rev. 1: 3; and that, consequently, it is to be understood by the people of God sufficiently to show them their position in the world's history, and the special duties required at their hands.

— VII —

That the world's history from specified dates in the past, the rise and fall of empires, and chronological succession of events down to the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom, are outlined in numerous great chains of prophecy; and that these prophecies are now all fulfilled except the closing scenes.

— VIII —

That the doctrine of the world's conversion and temporal millennium is a fable of these last days, calculated to lull men into a state of carnal security, and cause them to be overtaken by the great day of the Lord as by a thief in the night; that the second coming of Christ is to precede, not follow, the millennium; for until the Lord appears the papal power, with all its abominations, is to continue, the wheat and tares grow together, and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, as the word of God declares.

— IX —

That the mistake of Adventists in 1844 pertained to the nature of the event then to transpire, not to the time; that no prophetic period is given to reach to the second advent, but that the longest one, the two thousand and three hundred days of Dan. 8: 14, terminated in that year, and

brought us to an event called the cleansing of the sanctuary.

—X—

That the sanctuary of the new covenant is the tabernacle of God in Heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8, and onward, of which our Lord, as great High Priest, is minister; that this sanctuary is the antitype of the Mosaic tabernacle, and that the priestly work of our Lord, connected therewith, is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation. Heb. 8: 1-5, &c.; that this is the sanctuary to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, what is termed its cleansing being in this case, as in the type, simply the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, to finish the round of service connected therewith, by blotting out and removing from the sanctuary the sins which had been transferred to it by means of the ministration in the first apartment, Heb. 9: 22, 23; and that this work, in the antitype, commencing in 1844, occupies a brief but indefinite space, at the conclusion of which the work of mercy for the world is finished.

—XI—

That God's moral requirements are the same upon all men in all dispensations; that these are summarily contained in the commandments spoken by Jehovah from Sinai, engraven on the tables of

stone, and deposited in the ark, which was in consequence called the "ark of the covenant," or testament. Num. 10: 83, Heb. 9: 4, &c.; that this law is immutable and perpetual, being a transcript of the tables deposited in the ark in the true sanctuary on high, which is also, for the same reason, called the ark of God's testament; for under the sounding of the seventh trumpet we are told that "the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." Rev. 11: 19.

—XII—

That the fourth commandment of this law requires that we devote the seventh day of each week, commonly called Saturday, to abstinence from our own labor, and to the performance of sacred and religious duties; that this is the only weekly Sabbath known to the Bible, being the day that was set apart before paradise was lost, Gen. 2: 2, 3, and which will be observed in paradise restored, Isa. 66: 22, 23; that the facts upon which the Sabbath institution is based confine it to the seventh day, as they are not true of any other day; and that the terms Jewish Sabbath and Christian Sabbath, as applied to the weekly rest-day, are names of human invention, unscriptural in fact, and false in meaning.

—XIII—

That as the man of sin, the papacy, has thought to change times and laws (the laws of God), Dan 7: 25, and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment, we find a prophecy of a reform in this respect to be wrought among believers just before the coming of Christ. Isa. 56: 1, 2, 1 Pet. 1: 5, Rev. 14: 12, &c.

—XIV—

That as the natural or carnal heart is at enmity with God and his law, this enmity can be subdued only by a radical transformation of the affections, the exchange of unholy for holy principles; that this transformation follows repentance and faith, is the special work of the Holy Spirit, and constitutes regeneration or conversion.

—XV—

That as all have violated the law of God, and cannot of themselves render obedience to his just requirements, we are dependent on Christ, first, for justification from our past offences, and, secondly, for grace whereby to render acceptable obedience to his holy law in time to come.