

A Conference on Christian Fundamentals

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"The fact is that this world conference voices a fellowship that already exists. We are here representing many denominations. In us the prayer of Christ that we might all be one is actually answered. We are one in all deepest and profoundest convictions; in the knowledge of the truth our souls are knitted. While others are talking brotherhood and seeking to establish it, we are enjoying it, and it is a brotherhood of faith. We, without exception, believe in the authority of the Bible. Without exception we are assured of the very deity of Christ. Without debate we accept the atonement accomplished on the cross in the knowledge that Christ is now our intercessor at the right hand of our Father. We have our confidence, and the promises of his return to rule in this world are with us, the brilliant prospect, even that blessed hope of the Bible. To be sure, the church of Christ has been passing through the fires, as a modernist said, and has been made malleable by melting processes, but we cannot forget that every melting process has both a unifying and a separating result.

"The true gold is unified in the melting pot, but it is separated from the dross at the melting point. We are convinced that the future of the cause of Christ and of the church rests absolutely with the people who have conviction of truth begotten by the Spirit and strengthened in the knowledge of the Scriptures."

This crisis which has been reached in the great Christian church was recognized by practically every speaker. And we see in the efforts which these men are making, and in the program upon which they have entered, an earnest effort, possibly the last which we shall ever see, on the part of the great Christian church to save itself from the downward course into which it is being turned by many of its leaders.

Some of the ideas expressed by these men were wrong; some of their teachings on the prophecies were confused and confusing; but we appreciated none the less the high-mindedness and the lofty interest which characterized their endeavors. And we could only pray as we listened that in God's own good time they would be brought to a clearer understanding of the issues involved in the last great controversy between truth and error, that they would understand the true portent of the times in which we live and of what is involved in some of the great issues now before the world.

A Profession of Christian Faith

Near the close of the convention a statement of general doctrinal belief was prepared by a committee on resolutions, and enthusiastically adopted by the three thousand men and women who filled the Academy of Music, where the convention was held. This pronouncement expresses for the most part the fundamentals of Christian belief upon which the great majority of evangelical Christians unite. The statement is as follows:

"World Conference on Christian Fundamentals — 1919"

"DOCTRINAL STATEMENT"

"I. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.

"II. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

"III. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.

"IV. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed.

"V. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all that believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood.

"VI. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in his ascension into heaven, and in his present life there for us, as high priest and advocate.

"VII. We believe in 'that blessed hope,' the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"VIII. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God.

"IX. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting, conscious punishment of the lost."

Wherein We Dissent

To the general formal expression of this pronouncement, with the exception of the last article, we can give hearty assent. Seventh-day Adventists, of course, could not accept as Bible doctrine the statement regarding the conscious eternal punishment of the wicked. We believe in eternal punishment, but not in eternal punishing. We believe that the punishment which God inflicts upon the impenitent will be eternal, but we do not believe that the process by which this punishment is inflicted will be eternal. In other words, we believe that death is the punishment inflicted upon those who finally reject Christ as their Saviour, the same as life is the reward bestowed upon those who receive him. The death of the impenitent will be eternal the same as the life of the righteous will be eternal. But the means whereby this death penalty is inflicted — the suffering in the lake of fire — will not be eternal. Every man will be punished according to his deeds done in the body. Some, doubtless, will suffer longer than others, and, as in the case of Satan and his angels, the suffering will continue for a considerable period. But in the end sin and sinners and all the effects of the curse will be banished from God's fair universe, and not a blot or stain will be left to remind angels or man of the terrible results following the disobedience of those who rejected the sacrifice of Christ.

Seventh-day Adventists would also differ from the teachings of the Philadelphia Conference regarding the premillennial reign of Christ. We believe in the premillennial reign of Christ, but not in the same sense as was taught there. While we could accept the form of expression, we would have to accept it in a different meaning, doubtless, from those who drew up the resolution.

But while we believe for the most part these fundamental principles of Bible doctrine as enunciated by this conference, we believe that the list is by no means complete; that this company of earnest men and women, taking the Word of God as their guide in all matters of faith, should have enunciated as clearly other great principles which lie at the foundation of the superstructure of Christian faith, doctrines which are even more generally denied by Christendom than are some of the doctrines contained in the conference pronouncement. The doctrinal statement is weak in that it fails to do this. It is more at fault in its omissions than in the misstatement of what it expresses.

Fundamental Principles for Which Seventh-day Adventists Stand

In this connection it may be well to enumerate the chief fundamental principles upon which Seventh-day Adventists base their faith — Bible principles

for which they have earnestly contended throughout the years of their denominational history.

The Inspiration of the Bible

1. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by the inspiration of God, and contain a full revelation of his will to men, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

The Divine Trinity

2. That the Trinity consists of the eternal Father, a personal, spiritual being, omnipotent, omniscient, infinite in power, 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 one regenerating agency in the work of redemption. 1 John 5:7.

The Deity of Christ

3. That Jesus Christ possesses not only divine nature but deityship as well, 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 the earth as a man, suffered death on the cross, was raised from the dead the third day, ascended to the Father, where he ever lives to make intercession for us. That forgiveness and remission of sins, and the securing of eternal life at last, can be obtained only by faith in his atoning blood and through the redeeming grace which he supplies. Heb. 2:9-18.

The Mediation of Christ

4. That in fulfilment of the Old Testament types, Jesus, the Son of God, is now "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." That, as our great High Priest in this heavenly sanctuary, he presents his own sacrifice before the Father in behalf of sinful men, and to those who will accept it he ministers the needed grace with which they carry on their warfare against sin. Thus he serves as the one Mediator between God and man, rendering both unnecessary and impossible any other system of mediation. Heb. 4:14-16; 7:24-27.

The Ordinance of Baptism

5. That the proper form of baptism is by immersion, and that this ordinance of the Christian church should follow repentance and forgiveness of sins, and that through its celebration faith is shown in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Rom. 6:1-7.

Justification by Faith

6. That no man through his own efforts can obtain salvation. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one." Sonship with God cannot come through family inheritance or birth, by the power of the will, nor by cultivation of the intellect. With the call to sonship God extends the power of his free grace whereby men and women may attain to that holy relationship. This power is conferred through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who by his own blood justifies the believer, and by his indwelling life imparts power whereby it is possible to live a life of righteousness. John 1:11-13; Rom. 5:8-10.

The New Birth

7. That every soul, in order to obtain salvation, must experience the new birth. That this comprises an entire transformation of life and character through

the re-creative agency of the Holy Spirit, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:5; Matt. 18:3.

The Prophecies of the Bible

8. That the prophecies of God's Word are designed for the enlightenment of the believers, revealing to them where they are living in the history of the world, and the work that they should do in order to co-operate with God's plans and purposes concerning the proclamation of the everlasting gospel. Some of these prophecies contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, notably those relating to the first advent of Christ, have met a marked fulfilment. Other prophecies, particularly those found in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, relating to the second coming of Christ, are in process of fulfilment at the present time.

The Second Coming of Christ

9. That the second coming of Christ is set forth in the Scriptures as the great hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel plan of salvation. When the work of the gospel shall have been consummated, then Christ, who is now officiating as our great high priest in the heavens above, shall close his ministry and come to this earth to take his children home. His coming will be visible, personal, and literal. Many important events will be associated with his return; viz., the resurrection of the dead, the destruction of the wicked, the purification of the earth, the reward of the righteous, the establishment of his everlasting kingdom. Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:16-18; 2 Tim. 4:1; Dan. 7:27.

The Premillennial Reign of Christ

10. That the doctrine of the world's conversion before the coming of the Lord is a delusion of the enemy, designed to lull men into the sleep of carnal security so that the day of the Lord shall come upon them as a thief in the night. The Scriptures plainly teach that in place of the world's being converted before the coming of the Lord, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; that the enemy of all righteousness shall carry on his work until his final destruction; that the great multitude of men will follow the broad way to death, and that only a remnant will be saved, gathered out from all nations of earth at the second coming of Christ. The millennial reign of Christ will take place between the first and second resurrections, during which time the saints of all ages will live with their blessed Redeemer in the New Jerusalem above. At the end of this millennial reign the city, with its inhabitants, descends to this earth, the wicked dead are raised to be punished, the earth is purified by fire, becoming the everlasting abode of the blest, with Christ as king over all the earth. 2 Tim. 3:12, 13; Matt. 13:24-30; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; Acts 15:14; Revelation 20; Zech. 14:1-4.

Delusive Doctrines and Movements

11. That the closing days of earth's history will witness great delusive movements, designed by the enemy of all righteousness to lead men away from the pure truth of the gospel and plunge them into perdition. Men will be taught that they can follow their own evil inclination in this world, and after death have a probationary period of life where, under more favorable circumstances, they will be permitted to develop a Christian character. Purported revelations from the spirits of the dead, as represented in modern Spiritualism, will seek to supplant in the hearts of the bereaved and sorrowing a simple, childlike

faith in the promises of the Scriptures of Truth. Sin will be declared a myth, a nonentity, and disease and suffering aberrations of the mind, to be met and overcome by a doctrine of negation and by the cultivation of the consciousness of one's own inherent power. These evil teachings are current in the world under many names and "isms," and in the name of science falsely so called. They all serve one purpose, to confuse and confound the plain, simple teaching of the gospel message, and to turn men and women away from the one and only means of salvation through Christ Jesus to man-made systems of salvation.

The Ten Commandments

12. That the will of God for his children is comprehended in the law of ten commandments, and that these are great moral, unchangeable precepts binding upon the children of God in every age of the church. Ex. 20:1-17; James 2:12.

Relation of the Law to the Gospel

13. That God's moral law of ten commandments is the great sin detector. Into this law mankind, with consciences quickened by the Holy Spirit, may look as into a mirror, and see the defects of human character. But the law cannot take away sin. By the deeds of the law can no man be justified. The law can pronounce only the condemnation of death. The law is used by the Holy Spirit to lead men to Christ, the sin-pardoner, the Redeemer. Acceptance of the substitute and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ confirms or establishes this law. He who has been pardoned will not desire to continue in sin that grace may abound, but with the law written on his heart he will delight in the law of God after the inward man, seeking to show his love for Christ by obedience to his holy requirements. 1 John 3:4; James 1:22-25; Rom. 3:20-22; 3:31; 6:1, 2; 7:22; John 15:10.

The Law Written in the Heart

14. That through the new covenant relationship the Spirit of Christ writes this law upon the heart, and in this way only can its precepts find expression in the life in sincere, faithful obedience. Heb. 8:8-12; John 16:7-13.

The Memorial of Creation and the Sign of Sanctification

15. That the fourth commandment of this unchangeable law requires the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, an institution which was established and ordained in the garden of Eden before man sinned, embosomed in the great law of moral precepts spoken from Mt. Sinai, observed by prophet and priest throughout the old dispensation, kept by Christ and his apostles in the Christian dispensation, and given to mankind in every age to keep alive in their hearts the knowledge of its Author, the Creator of all things. This holy institution is at the same time a memorial of creation and a sign of sanctification. Ex. 31:12-17; Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Matt. 12:1-12; Luke 4:16; 23:56; Acts 17:1-3; 18:4, 11.

Relation of Church and State

16. That the church and the state occupy different spheres of operation, the former dealing with questions of a religious character, the sphere of the latter pertaining alone to questions of a civil character. The church and state should therefore be kept forever separate. Matt. 22:15-22; Rom. 13:1-7.

Life Only in Christ

17. That man possesses a nature inherently sinful and dying; that eternal life and immortality come

only through the gospel, and are bestowed as the free gift of God, by Jesus Christ, in the day of final awards. Rom. 2:6, 7; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; 1 Cor. 15:51-55.

The State of the Dead

18. That the condition of man in death is one of unconsciousness and inactivity. That all men, good and evil alike, remain in the grave from death till the resurrection. That in the general resurrection of the last day the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; Job 14:21; John 5:28, 29.

The Punishment of the Wicked

19. That the finally impenitent will by the fires of the last day be reduced to a state of nonexistence, becoming as if they had not been. That in thus depriving them of the life which they failed to use to his glory, God not alone vindicates the justice of his government, but exercises toward the wicked his great final act of love in that he deprives them of a life which has become one of miserable existence, and which if it were continued would grow more intolerable to those who bore it. Rom. 6:23; Mal. 4:1-3; Obadiah 16.

The Resurrection

20. That at the end of the world there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. The resurrection of the just will take place at the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the unjust will take place a thousand years later, at the end of Christ's millennial reign. John 5:28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-55; Rev. 20:5-10.

The Glorious State

21. That in the fires of the last day, this earth will be regenerated and cleansed from the effects of the curse; and that in the final conflagration, Satan and all the impenitent will be destroyed. The creation of God will be restored to its pristine beauty and purity, and will forever constitute the abode of the saints of the Lord. 2 Peter 3:7-13; Isaiah 35; Rev. 21:1-7.

The Closing Gospel Message

22. That a warning message of the imminence of Christ's return and of Heaven's impending judgments is now due the world, and that the giving of this message rests as a solemn duty upon those who recognize the signs of the times and the application of fulfilling prophecy to present-day conditions. Rev. 14:6-14.

A New Alignment of Forces

The religious world today is in the throes of a great revolution. A new alignment is being made in the great Christian church. The forces represented in higher criticism, new thought, etc., are aligning themselves against the faith of the fathers. As a timely and much-needed protest against this new alignment, stand the forces of conservatism as represented by the teachers in the Philadelphia conference, who, from their viewpoint, are endeavoring to maintain the faith once for all delivered to the saints. May God bless them in their earnest efforts to turn back the rising tide of infidelity.

Seventh-day Adventists and the Crisis

Seventh-day Adventists need not mistake their duty in the crisis which exists. They can find no common ground of affiliation with the forces of in-

idelity inside of Christendom or outside. God has placed his church in the world as the exponent of his Word, as the conservator of his truth, as the herald of his gospel. The divine authority of that Word at the present time is denied, its holy precepts discounted; his sacred truth is intermingled with specious error; the gospel message of his dear Son is perverted.

Seventh-day Adventists as never before should prove both by their teaching and their lives that they are men and women of the Book, that they believe with childlike simplicity its holy principles. And they should seek by every means in their power to stem the rising tide of infidelity and iniquity which is setting in upon the world.

They cannot hope to stay the invasion of skepticism or unbelief so far as the world, or even the majority of the great Christian church, is concerned, but they may confidently hope to save individual men and women; and this is the grand purpose of the gospel of Christ. Nowhere does the Word represent that the world will ever be converted. On the other hand, we are plainly told that the great Christian church itself will become worldly and backslidden in the last days. But God has commanded his gospel messengers to go to all nations to gather out from among them a people for his name. This command is to his remnant church. May God make us true and loyal to our heavenly commission.

F. M. W.

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The Proposed Covenant for the League of Nations

THE editor of the *Independent*, Mr. Hamilton Holt, an earnest advocate of the League of Nations, prints in a recent number of his paper the following summary of the proposed covenant:

"1. They agree that war or the threat of war is the concern of all.

"2. They reserve the right to take any action deemed wise to safeguard the peace of the world.

"3. They agree that the making of war contrary to the covenant shall be considered an act of war against all members of the League.

"4. They undertake to respect and preserve each other's territory and political independence as against external aggression. But it is expressly provided that this does not affect the Monroe Doctrine.

"5. They accord to each member the right to call the attention of the League to anything that threatens to disturb the peace of the world.

"6. They agree that any member can bring about a submission of its dispute to the proper organs of the League by giving notice of the existence of the dispute to the secretary general, who will arrange for a hearing.

"7. They agree to submit any case likely to lead to war either to arbitration or to conciliation.

"8. They will in no case go to war until three months after an arbitral award or the recommendation of the council.

"9. They will carry out in good faith any arbitral award.

"10. They agree to take disputes not submitted to arbitration to the council.

"11. They will furnish a complete statement of their case to the secretary general, who will make all arrangements for the hearing of it by the council.

"12. They will not go to war against any member that carries out the unanimous recommendations of the council.

"13. They will exert economic pressure upon any nation going to war contrary to the covenants of the League. In case this is ineffectual it is made mandatory on the council to recommend what military and naval forces shall be used.

"14. They will afford passage through their territory to the forces of the League members against an offending nation.

"15. They accept the principle that peace requires the reduction of armaments to the lowest point consistent with na-

tional safety. Having reduced them in accordance with the advice of the executive council, they will not increase them without the consent of the council, though the whole matter shall be subject to reconsideration and revision at least every ten years.

"16. They will exchange full information in regard to (a) their military and naval programs and (b) industries suited to warlike purposes.

"17. They agree that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions is open to great objections, and they make it mandatory upon the council to suggest proper remedies.

"18. They will make all offices under the League open equally to men and women.

"19. They agree that each member shall pay its share of the expenses of the League.

"20. They will register all new treaties that they make with the secretariat, and none shall be binding until so registered.

"21. They will abrogate all treaties inconsistent with the covenant and will not hereafter enter into such arrangements.

"22. They will make no conquest of backward people and unappropriated parts of the world but hold them as a sacred trust for civilization.

"23. They will (in such places as Central Africa) guarantee freedom of religion and the prohibition of abuses, such as the slave trade, arms traffic, and the liquor traffic.

"24. They will endeavor to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions for labor at home and with all countries with which they trade, and for that purpose will establish the necessary organizations.

"25. They will supervise the execution of such agreements as those with regard to the traffic in women and children, and the trade in arms, drugs, and ammunition.

"26. They will maintain freedom of transit and equitable treatment for the commerce of nations.

"27. They will put all present and future international bureaus under the control of the League.

"28. They will co-operate in measures for the control of disease and especially in the work of the Red Cross.

"29. In order to carry out the foregoing agreements they will establish such agencies as (a) an Assembly representing all members of the League; (b) a Council of Nine; (c) a Secretariat; (d) a Permanent Court of International Justice; (e) a Commission on Military and Naval Affairs; (f) a Commission on Mandatories; (g) a Commission on Labor; (h) other committees and bureaus:

"In addition to the covenants and machinery by which its obligations are to be carried out, the League permits:

"1. Amendments by unanimous vote of the council and majority vote of the assembly.

"2. Resignation when a state does not abide by an amendment.

"3. Secession on two years' notice, provided all international obligations have been fulfilled.

"4. Expulsion by unanimous vote of the council.

"5. Admission by two-thirds vote of the assembly, provided the nation seeking admission gives 'effective guaranties' of its sincere intention to observe international obligations and accepts the regulations prescribed by the League in regard to its military and naval forces and armaments."

This summary is worthy of careful reading, as it will afford the reader a fairly intelligent and comprehensive idea of the provisions of this really famous document.

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EVERY teacher should daily receive instruction from Christ, and should labor constantly under his guidance. It is impossible for him rightly to understand or to perform his work unless he is much with God in prayer. Only by divine aid, combined with earnest, self-denying effort, can he hope to do his work wisely and well.

Unless the teacher realizes the need of prayer, and humbles his heart before God, he will lose the very essence of education. He should know how to pray, and what language to use in prayer. "I am the vine," Jesus said, "ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15: 5. The teacher should let the fruit of faith be manifest in his prayers. He should learn how to come to the Lord and plead with him until he receives the assurance that his petitions are heard. — "Counsels to Teachers," p. 231.