

“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. 8:4, 5; 9:6, 7; etc.

**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 facts 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. 1:1-3; 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 anti -type 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, etc.; 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. 10:33, Heb. 9:4, etc.; 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, etc.

**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.**

**XVI – That the Spirit of God was promised to manifest itself in the church through certain gifts, enumerated especially in 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4; that these gifts are not designed to supersede, or 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.

**XVII** – That God, in accordance with his uniform dealings with the race, sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ; that this work is symbolized by the three messages of Rev. 14, the last one bringing to view the work of reform on the law of God, that his people may acquire a complete readiness for that event.

**XVIII** – That the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary (see proposition X), synchronizing with the time of the proclamation of the third message, is a time of investigative judgment, first with reference to the dead, and at the close of probation with reference to the living, to determine who of the

myriads now sleeping in the dust of the earth are worthy of a part in the first resurrection, and who of its living multitudes are worthy of translation-points which must be determined before the Lord appears.

**XIX** – That the grave, whither we all tend, expressed by the Hebrew sheol, and the Greek hades, is a place of darkness in which there is no work, device, wisdom, or knowledge. Eccl. 9:10.

**XX** – That the state to which we are reduced by death is one of silence, inactivity, and entire unconsciousness. Ps. 146:4; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Dan. 12:2, etc.

**XXI** – That out of this prison house of the grave mankind are to be brought by a bodily resurrection; the righteous having part in the first resurrection, which takes place at the second advent of Christ, the wicked in the second resurrection, which takes place a thousand years thereafter. Rev. 20:4-6.

**XXII** – That at the last trump, the living righteous are to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and with the **resurrected righteous are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air,** so forever to be with the Lord.

**XXIII** – That these immortalized ones are then taken to Heaven, to the New Jerusalem, the Father's house in which there are many mansions, John 14:1-3, where **they reign with Christ a thousand years, judging the world and fallen angels,** that is, apportioning the punishment to be executed upon them at the close of the one thousand years; Rev. 20:4; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; that during this time the earth lies in a desolate and chaotic condition, Jer. 4:20-27, described, as in the beginning by the Greek term abussos (ἄβυσσος) bottomless pit (Septuagint of Gen. 1:2); and that here Satan is confined during the thousand years, Rev. 20:1, 2, and here finally destroyed, Rev. 20:10; Mal. 4:1; the theater of the ruin he has wrought in the universe, being appropriately made for a time his gloomy prison house, and then the place of his final execution.

**XXIV** – That at the end of the thousand years, the Lord descends with his people and the New Jerusalem, Rev. 21:2, the wicked dead are raised and come up upon the surface of the yet unrenewed earth, and gather about the city, the camp of the saints, Rev. 20:9, and fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. They are then consumed root and branch, Mal. 4:1, becoming as though they had not been. Obad. 15, 16. In this everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thess. 1:9, the wicked meet the everlasting punishment threatened against them, Matt. 25:46. This is the perdition of ungodly men, the fire which consumes them being the fire for which "the heavens and the earth which are now" are kept in store, which shall melt even the elements with its intensity, and purge the earth from the deepest stains of the curse of sin. 2 Pet. 3:7-12.

**XXV** – That a new heavens and earth shall spring by the power of God from the ashes of the old, to be, with the New Jerusalem for its metropolis and capital, the eternal inheritance of the saints, the place where the righteous shall evermore dwell. 2 Pet. 3:13; Ps. 37:11, 29; Matt. 5:5.

**Creed:** Is an agreed belief or interpretation on which a group decides to associate. The creed governs *how* those members interpret events or ideas. To have a creed means that the body has the determining authority, *therefore* the majority is the deciding force regardless of facts and evidence.

**"The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed,** telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth is to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And fifth, to commence persecution against such." (Loughborough/*Review and Herald*, October 8, 1861)

Now, what are the principal agents in oppressing and injuring this Church? We answer, all those sects, whether Roman Catholics or Protestants, that go to work to divide and bring in "confusion" to the oneness of the Church. And how is this done? **It is done by the manufacturing of creeds, whether written or oral, and endeavoring to organize a party; the test of fellowship being now, not love to God and each other, but assent to these creeds.** . . . Now look for the loving Church of God; where is it? All is "confusion"-rent and torn into as many parties as there are agents of sects to carry on the Babylonish work. Instead of the Church of God, a loving, united, brotherly body, delighting to meet each other, you now have Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc., etc., down to the end of the list of divisions; and the so called churches are each making war on the other, not because they do not live as holy as themselves, but **because their creeds differ; and hence "confusion" or Babylon is truly their name.** 2 {New York, The Midnight Cry Feb 1844}

The following from Elder James White upon the subject of organization and discipline appeared in the Review of Jan. 4, 1881:-

"Organization was designed to secure unity of action, and as a protection from imposture. It was never intended as a scourge to compel obedience, but rather for the protection of the people of God. Christ does not drive his people; he calls them. 'My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.' Our Living Head leads the way, and calls his people to follow. "Human **creeds** cannot produce unity. **Church force cannot press the church into one body.** Christ never designed that human minds should be moulded for heaven by the influence of other human minds. 'The head of every man is Christ.' His part is to lead, and to mould, and to stamp his own image upon the heirs of eternal glory. However important organization may be for the protection of the church, and to secure harmony of action, it must not come in to take the discipline from the hands of the Master.

*Babylon's Merchandise.* In these verses we have an enumeration of great Babylon's merchandise, which includes everything pertaining to luxurious living, pomp, and worldly display. All kinds of mercantile traffic are brought to view. The declaration concerning slaves and souls of men may pertain more particularly to the spiritual domain, and have reference to slavery of conscience by the **creeds** of these bodies, which in some cases is more oppressive than physical bondage. D&R 676.1.

"Do not carry your **creed** to the Bible, and read the Scriptures in the light of that **creed**. If you find that your opinions are opposed to a plain "Thus saith the Lord," or to any command or prohibition He has given, give heed to the Word of God rather than to the sayings of men. Let every controversy or dispute be settled by "It is written." ... {OHC 207.3}

"The mistake made by the Roman Catholic is that he reads the Bible in the light of the priests and rulers of the church, the early fathers, or other Catholic expositors. Laying aside all **creeds** or articles prescribed by any church, we are to read the Bible as the word of God to us. The Light of the world will enable us to distinguish between truth and antagonistic errors." {2MR vol 2, page 89}

"The question is, "What is truth?" It is not how many years have I believed that makes it the truth. You must bring your **creed** to the Bible and let the light of the Bible define your **creed** and show where it comes short and where the difficulty is. The Bible is to be your standard, the living oracles of Jehovah are to be your guide. **You are to dig for the truth as for hidden treasures.** You are to find where the treasure is, and then you are to plow every inch of that field to get the jewels. You are to work the mines of truth for new gems, for new diamonds, and you will find them." FW Chap 9. The Quality of Our Faith

"The reason why He does not oftener choose men of learning and high position to lead out in reform movements is that they trust to their **creeds**, theories, and theological systems, and feel no need to be taught of God. Only those who have a personal connection with the Source of wisdom are able to understand or explain the Scriptures." GC 456.