

The New "Fundamental Belief"

At the 1980 General Conference Session in Dallas, the delegates were presented with a new *Statement of Beliefs*, which they were asked to approve and make official. The greater part of that Session was spent, by the delegates, in arguing over the phrasing in the new statement. It was worded in a very flowery manner which covered over the fact that essential points of our faith had been toned down, so as to make our "official Statement of Beliefs" more acceptable to the other denominations.

The Desmond Ford crisis was in progress at the time; and the week-long Glacier View meeting, in Colorado, was held immediately after the Dallas Session ended.

At the close of Glacier View, Ford privately told an astonished President N.C. Wilson that he, Ford, would be perfectly happy to affirm his full support for the new Statement of Belief.

In reality, the Dallas Statement was drafted by the theological Seminary teachers at Andrews University—in order to provide careful wording that would include the positions of both conservatives and new-theology advocates in the church—and Ford too.

Keep in mind that, as soon as Glacier View ended, a very large number of the Andrews faculty signed a letter to Wilson, pleading with him not to fire Ford. On the Sabbath (Sabbath) afternoon after Glacier View, a majority of the faculty at Pacific Union College sent a telegram to Wilson, pleading with him not to discharge Ford from the ministry. (For more on all this, see our 320-page *New Theology Tractbook*, \$24.00, plus \$3.00 p&h.) The Dallas Statement was produced to legitimize Protestant salvation-in-sin theology in our church, so hundreds of our local pastors would not be ousted.

On one hand were the conservatives, in the denomination, who wanted to remain by our historic Bible/Spirit of Prophecy positions.

On the other were the new theology and liberals in our midst, who wanted to downplay the importance of obedience to the law of God; the need for ongoing sanctification through a continual resistance of sin and obedience to God's Word; confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy; and the truth about Christ's heavenly Sanctuary ministry, the final atonement, and the Investigative Judgment.

Once again, the statement of Jesus was proven true: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

Whenever it appeared that the delegates at Dallas might change a phrase to include more conserva-

tive positions, the chair would recommend that the matter be "sent back to committee for further study." When it would later be brought back, the delegates would be told that "they must hurry along," and the latest backroom phrasing would be voted in. The result was something of a hodgepodge which does not clearly and forcefully state our basic positions.

All this was repeated on a smaller scale this summer, 25 years after the adoption of the 27 "Beliefs" of the Dallas Statement.

At the St. Louis Session, a 28th "Belief" was adopted. It may be a cherished belief of the liberals in the church, but not that of any thinking conservative who thoughtfully reads the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

Just as done 25 years earlier at Dallas, the newly worded material was presented a little, day after day, over a five-day period. This kept the delegates busy; so they would not give proper attention to other urgent matters. Instead, they would pass prearranged agenda items with relatively little discussion.

But, in addition, the splitting up of discussion into little bits, here and there, tended to confuse the minds of the delegates; so they could not focus on what was really involved in this very significant paragraph.

Can you imagine spending portions of five days to discuss a single paragraph, with only five sentences?

For some reason, the delegates had a difficult time being recognized by the chairman at the podium. The confusion was compounded by the fact that there were continual interruptions for other matters, including saying happy birthday to someone's father. The result was a somewhat incoherent discussion that dragged on, amid repeated—often very lengthy—interruptions, over a course of several days.

In addition, just as in 1980, when a topic was referred back to committee "to be studied," it would usually not be brought back until later in the week when, due to time pressure, a quick vote of approval would be given to phrases which were not Biblically correct.

The original version of this new Fundamental Belief received limited circulation in the summer of 2004.

The theme was obviously about sanctification; yet said nothing about resisting temptation, overcoming sin, or obeying the law of God. It is basically a new-theology belief, not acceptable to historic believ-

GROWING IN CHRIST

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former ways of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His

character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience.

(Ps 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11-12; Col 1:13-14; 2:6, 14-15; Luke 10:17-20; Eph 5:19-20; 6:12-18; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 2 Cor 3:17, 18; Phil 3:7-14; 1 Thess 5:16-18; Matt 20:25-28; John 20:21; Gal 5:22-25; Rom 8:38-39; 1 John 4:4; Heb 10:25)

ers.

Let us now consider this new “Belief” (the final form of which is printed above):

Significantly, this paragraph was not presented to the delegates as a doctrinal statement on sanctification (although the title would imply that),—but as a statement needed by the overseas divisions to counteract witchcraft! The delegates were assured that this new addition was necessary for that reason, and that reason alone. Yet delegates from overseas nations (and from our own) could not see why it was so urgently needed “to oppose witchcraft.”

The truth is that the authors of this new-theology belief wanted to divert attention away from the real objective: to more fully eliminate obedience to God’s requirements from the complete statement of Fundamental Beliefs.

When you read the above statement of “belief,” you find that it says nothing whatever about how to deal with witchcraft! Instead, the statement merely says that witchcraft is something to be ignored. — And then the statement launches into an extremely extended and complicated collection of verbiage—which says just one thing: All of us in the church are already saved, and have been since we first came to Christ!

This was a stealth addition to the set of Fundamental Beliefs.

“Growing in Christ.”

As we will learn below, this title is not about grow-

ing in Christ, but about sleeping in our sins.

“*By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil.*” This is a true statement. Beginning with a true statement encourages the reader to have confidence in that which follows.

“*He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom.*” That is also true. But the fact that you and I, in this life, must still contend with evil powers and resist their temptations to sin is not mentioned. This omission changes the first two sentences into a half-truth; since the other half of the truth is missing.

Yes, Christ has conquered the demons; but, while we are in this world, we must continually plead with Him for help against the trials, troubles, temptations, and crises that evil angels would seek to press upon us. Yes, we can have victory right now; but it is only as we cling to Jesus that it can be ours. It is not something we got when we first came to Christ years ago.

At this juncture, the new “belief” immediately switches to its main point: a type of instantaneous sanctification, a state of Christian living in which we no longer need resist sin at all.

“*Jesus’ victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love.*”

Can you imagine a lengthy Adventist statement describing sanctification—which does not mention the words “sin,” “temptation,” “obedience,” or “God’s

The New “Fundamental Belief”

law”! Although it purports to be about “growing in Christ,” the word, “sanctification,” is not mentioned either. That is understandable; for this “Belief” has nothing to do with growth in Christ, but rather not growing in Christ.

Yet that is what we find in this crazy quilt “Statement of Belief” which we are supposed to accept and live by!

I will agree that Protestants can accept this entire paragraph,—but not historic Adventists!

Yes, “Jesus’ victory” does “give us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us,”—but only as we continually look to Him for help and overcoming strength. We are only safe, moment by moment, as we cling to Him. We can only have His victory as, through surrender and obedience, we make His victory our own. Jesus is not the only overcomer. Through His enabling strength, we are to be overcomers too.

This twisted statement says that all we need do in order to have this victory is to “walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love.” Oh, yes, we need and want that; but, once again, the other half is not told. Indeed, that other half is the part that precedes and causes the part that is stated. We are told the effect, but not the cause. First comes the clinging and crying for help. And after that comes the peace, joy, and assurance that follows—because we are daily overcoming.

There are no promises in Revelation to those who are overcome by sin, but only to those who overcome it. We must daily fight the good fight of faith. This is not a dead faith or a hollow faith,—but an empowered faith, faith to live right, faith to help others, faith to live above the pettiness and impurity which controls so many.

“Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us.” That is an excellent sentence! But where is the rest of the sentence? Empowered to do what? Read the rest of the belief: It teaches empowerment to do nothing.

“Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds.” I like the phrase, “Continually committed to Jesus”; but the rest of the committal is missing. Committed to do what? Nothing. Relax and enjoy life;—for this strange, new sanctification does nothing more than pretend to set you free from the burden of your past deeds. If you do not live right just now, the burden of your past deeds rolls back on you. Very soon, you are committing them again! Sins not forsaken soon again are beloved.

There is more in life than being set free from our past. There are life’s battles today to be met and dealt with in the enabling strength of Christ. But this para-

“The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what to 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.”

—John N. Loughborough (1832-1924),
one of our pioneer evangelists

graph does not mention such things.

“No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former ways of life.” Correct as far as it goes. But, once again, it does not state the other half of Christian living, the half that precedes it—the half that produces it.

The faithful Christian does not live in darkness, because he lives in the light of Christ’s presence and approval. He fears neither the devil nor the judgment; because, in Christ’s strength, he has true “righteousness by faith,” which is right-doing by faith. He is not ignorant of the path to heaven; because he is walking it daily, hand in hand, with Christ. Only he can find genuine meaning to life. Such ones have the patience of the saints. They plead for help and avoid temptation; and, by the enabling grace of Christ, they live in strict obedience to what the Inspired Writings tell them to do.

Next comes a long sentence that sounds very good, yet carefully omits something very important:

“In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church.”

How are we to grow into the likeness of Christ’s character? Without steadfast resistance of evil and decided obedience to God’s requirements, we will very soon lose all desire for study, meditation, and happy songs. Our worship gatherings will become dead. If we do not steadfastly resist sin in Christ’s strength, we will grow, not into Christ’s character, but Satan’s.

What does it mean to participate in “the mission of the Church”? If the church does not bother to put away its sins, it has no mission. It surely cannot convert the lost out in the world, if its own members are steadily becoming lost in the church.

“As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salva-

tion, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience.”

The “salvation” described in this new belief is something that happened in the past. The new theology teaches that you were saved at the cross; and all you need do now is verbally accept Christ as your Saviour—and you are saved! Your future is certain.

It may sound beautiful to say that every moment and task is transformed into a “spiritual experience”; but, if you are living in sin, the suggestion that such is your present experience is a lie. You will be in constant contact with the wrong spirits.

If you imagine that you can be saved in your sins, you are living in a fool’s paradise. Someone needs to awaken you before it is too late.

Who wrote this contorted perversion of Christian living? This new “belief” was very likely drafted by liberal Bible teachers in the Seminary at Andrews.—Yet those are the men in charge of training all the future ministers of our denomination! Ever since a General Conference ruling, made in the summer of 1958, all the future English-speaking ministers of the church are supposed to receive advanced training at that Andrews Seminary. With such instructors, teaching such twisted theories of salvation, what hope is there for the faithful who attend church each week and listen to their graduated students?

Each year the crisis deepens. Each year more precious souls lose their way. And leaders and followers let it continue. The followers do not consider it their place to speak up; and, for some unknown reason, the leaders do not think they should either.

Taken as a whole, this new “Belief” is a horrible caricature of godly living in Christ.

How can this aberration be titled “Growing in Christ,” when Christian growth is keyed to godliness? This strange, new belief produces a growth in self-deception. There can be no growth in “peace, joy, and assurance of His love” when there is no surrender to His will and obedience to His laws.

This liberal concept, which we are supposed to accept as a belief of our faith, is concluded by a long list of Bible references. They are supposed to make the whole thing “Biblical.”

But a host of other references, dealing with the sanctified life, were left out. Here are a few about true sanctification to consider:

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment**, with every secret thing,

whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”—*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.*

“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”—Revelation 22:14-15.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! **for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath**, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time . .

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with **the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments** of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”—*Revelation 12:11-12, 17.*

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, **Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord** from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; **and their works do follow them.”—Revelation 14:12-13.**

Yes, there are “works” in the Christian life. We need not be ashamed to say it. Lots of works, but they are all done in Christ—through His enabling grace. “Good works” are commended by Scripture, and mean living a godly life. We do not live in a vacuum. Everyone has works of one kind or another. If ours are not good things done in Christ, they are bad things inspired by the devil.

We live at a time in history when God wants us to stand up and resist this incoming tide of wickedness into Adventism. Men deny the Lord that bought them when they imagine that mere profession, without living in strict obedience to the Ten Commandments, can provide them with a passport to heaven.

Instead of the gift of God promised in Romans 6:23, many will ere long receive the wages of sin. If they have tried to convince others that they also can be saved in sin, then the sentence received as wages will be even more severe.

I would not wish to receive the judgment, after the second resurrection, that will be meted out to these safety-in-sin theologians and pastors.

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