

A
DECLARATION
OF THE
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
TAUGHT AND PRACTICED
BY THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
IN SEVENTH-DAY BAPTIST CHURCH
BATTLE CREEK, MICH.:
1872.

DOES GOD'S CHURCH NEED A CREED?

PERIODICALS

LETTERS

GC SESSIONS

EGW Q&A

Does God's Church Need a Creed?

God's Church should both teach and strive to meet the highest standard which is perfection in Christ Jesus. However, this should never be achieved in the believer through coercion, threat, and force.

Scripture

Here are they that keep the **commandments of God**, and the **faith of Jesus**. Revelation 14:12

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Zechariah 4:6

Definitions and Subject Matter

Creed

Credo comes straight from the Latin word meaning "I believe", and is the first word of many religious credos, or creeds, such as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. But the word can be applied to any guiding principle or set of principles. *MiriamWebster.com*

1. A brief summary of the **articles of Christian faith**; a symbol; as the Apostolic creed

2. That which is believed; any system of **principles** which are believed or professed; as a political creed

1828 Websters

Standard

1. An ensign of war; a staff with a flag or colors. The troops repair to their standard. The royal standard of Great Britain is a flag, in which the imperial ensigns of England, Scotland and Ireland are quartered with the armorial bearings of Hanover.

STANDARD-BEARER, noun [standard and bear.] An officer of an army, company, or troop, that bears a standard; an ensign of infantry or a cornet of horse.

3. That which is established as a rule or model, by the authority of public opinion, or by respectable opinions, or by custom or general consent; as writings which are admitted to be the standard of style and taste. Homers Iliad is the standard of heroic poetry. Demosthenes and Cicero are the standards of oratory. Of modern eloquence, we have an excellent standard in the speeches of lord Chatham. Addisons writings furnish a good standard of pure, chaste and elegant English style. It is not an easy thing to erect a standard of taste.

Ms53-1898

We are to lift up our **standard. The Bible, and the Bible only is to be the foundation of our faith.** The Word is to be lifted up **as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness.** The most learned cannot **add to this Word** without adding unto himself the plagues written in this book.

RH April 22, 1884

As the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so was Christ lifted up to draw all men unto him. All who looked upon that serpent, the means that God had provided, were healed; so in our sinfulness, in our great need, we must "look and live."

1872 Fundamental Principles: (preamble)

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.**

1889 Fundamental Principles: (preamble)

As elsewhere stated, **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 principal features of their religious faith**, upon which there is, **so far as we know**, entire unanimity throughout the body. They believe,

Added in 1889

1889 Study Guide 14 - A Peculiar People

1889 Study Guide 15 - Christian Dress

1889 Study Guide 16 - Financial Obligation

The Evidence

Non-immortality of the Soul

QUESTION. Do you make the belief in the **non-immortality of the soul** a test of fellowship? {ARSH July 23, 1861, p. 61.9}

ANSWER. We do not. Our people, with hardly an exception, are all right on that subject. Those who reject our views of this question, generally stand far off from us. The truth, not we, does the testing. ARSH July 23, 1861

Spirit of Prophecy

G. I. Butler

Our enemies try very hard to make it appear that we make the visions a **test of fellowship**. They must know themselves that this charge is false. Our leading men have never done this, and the **visions themselves teach that it should not be done**. It would be most absurd and impossible to do so, even if we would do it. With people in all parts of the world embracing our views who never, saw Sister White or heard of her, how could we make them a test of fellowship? By their own admissions, our opponents have shown that we do not do so. They claim that there are many among us who do not believe the visions. This is true; yet these are in our churches, and are not disfellowshipped. They have claimed in this "Extra" that Elds. Smith, Canright, and Gage did not believe the visions; yet **all of them are members of our churches, two of them hold credentials as ministers, and one of them holds very important offices**. Why will men talk so foolishly and unreasonably as to even show they are not consistent in their own statements? Hatred blinds the mind, and destroys their good sense. No; we do not make the visions a test, and never have. But we do claim **the right to believe them, to talk about them freely, and to read them in**

private and in public, and shall no doubt continue to exercise that right, regardless of the spite of those who hate us. *G. I. Butler, The Visions: How Are They Held Among S.D. Adventists; RH Supplement, Aug. 14, 1883*

Ellen White

I have been shown that some, especially in Iowa, make the visions a rule to measure all by, and have **taken a course which my husband and myself have never pursued in our labors.** Some are unacquainted with me and my labors, and they are very skeptical of anything bearing the name of visions. **This is all natural, and can only be overcome by experience.** If individuals are not settled, **they should not be crowded off.** ... **Some have been required to endorse the visions when they could not conscientiously do so, and in this way some honest souls have been driven to take positions against the visions, and against the body, which they never would have taken; had their case been managed with discretion and mercy.** 1T 382

James White

It is well known that we have been charged with testing all men by the visions, and of making them the rule of our faith. This is a bold untruth, of which those who uttered it were not ignorant. James White ARSH January 22, 1857

Diet

The question whether we shall eat butter, meat, or cheese is not to be presented to anyone as a test, but we are to educate and to show the evils of the things that are objectionable. Those who gather up these things and drive them upon others

do not know what work they are doing. The Word of God has given tests to His people. **The keeping of God's holy law, the Sabbath, is a test,** a sign between God and His people throughout their generations forever. **Forever this is the burden of the third angel's message—the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.** Ms 5, 1881

The food question has never been made a test. The principles of health reform have been kept before our people. From a health standpoint, there is great danger in the use of flesh meats. The curse of God is on the animal creation, and the disease communicated through meat is not discerned. Ms41-1900

God calls upon those for whom Christ died to take proper care of themselves and set a right example to others. My brother, you are not to make a test for the people of God upon the question of diet, for they will lose confidence in teachings that are **strained to the farthest point of extension.** The Lord desires His people to be sound on every point in health reform, but we **must not go to extremes.** Lt 37, 1901

We have never made meat-eating a test of fellowship, never: but when the Lord presents before us the evil of eating the flesh of dead animals that are corrupted with disease, — scrofula, cancer, tumors and these pulmonary diseases, it behooves everyone who knows these things to speak decidedly against subsisting on such a diet. Experiences in Australia 321, 1891

I have eaten two meals each day for the last twenty-five years. I do not use butter myself, but some of my workers who sit at my table eat butter. They cannot take care of milk; it sours on the stomach, while they can take care of a small quantity of butter. We cannot regulate the diet question by making any rule. Some can eat beans and dried peas, but to me this diet is painful. It is like poison. Some have appetites and taste for certain things,

and assimilate them well. Others have no appetite for these articles. So one rule cannot be made for everyone.

(To Elder and Mrs. S.N. Haskell who were making the eating of pork a test of fellowship in New York City in 1858)

I saw that your views concerning **swine's flesh** would prove no injury to yourselves; but in your judgment and opinion **you have made this question a test**. If God requires His people to abstain from swine's flesh, **He will convict them on the matter**. He is just as willing to show His honest children their duty, as to show their duty to individuals upon whom He has not laid the burden of His work. **If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His church their duty.** 1T 206

If you are a Bible doer as well as a Bible reader you must understand from the Scriptures that **swine's flesh was prohibited by Jesus Christ enshrouded in the billowy cloud. This is not a test question.** Directions have been given to families that such articles as butter and the eating largely of flesh meats is **not the best for physical and mental health**. Fruits and grains and vegetables would, if cooked properly and eaten in moderate quantities, be proper articles of diet. Ms 15, 1889

You ask in regard to canvassers who travel and have to eat bread with **swine's flesh in it**. I see here a **serious difficulty**, but there is a remedy. Learn to make good, hygienic rolls and keep them with you. You can generally obtain hot milk, or at least a cup of hot water with milk, and this, with fruit or without fruit, will nourish the system. Many plans may be devised with some little tact and labor, that many difficulties in the line of eating unwholesome food may be overcome. I advise every Sabbathkeeping canvasser to **avoid meat eating, not because it is**

regarded as sin to eat meat, but because it is not healthful. The animal creation is groaning. Ms 15, 1889

We are not to make rules with the idea that they are never to be changed or modified. In our sanitariums the Seventh-day Sabbath is ever to be kept holy. No tea, coffee, or flesh meat is to be served, unless it is in some special case, where the patient particularly desires it, and then, these articles of food should be served to him in his room. No tests that the Bible does not require are to be brought in. Every effort should be made to win the confidence of the patients, that their hearts may be reached by the truth. **The workers are to draw as near to them as they can, bringing them into the sunshine of Christ's love. 1MR 290.4**

Dress

Some were greatly troubled that **I did not make the dress a test question**, and still others, because I advised those who had unbelieving husbands or children **not to adopt the reform dress**, as it might lead to unhappiness that would counteract all the good to be derived from its use. 4T 637

Be careful in every move that you make. We are now very near the great crisis. The Lord would have every action performed with an eye single to His glory. To create a new issue on the dress question would be the very thing that would please the enemy. There would be much talk, much burden one for another because all do not dress exactly alike. The agitation on this subject is not demanded. Tests are not to be manufactured. **We have a test for this time – the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and nothing is to be brought in to draw the mind and heart from the great work of preparation for this time. The dress question is not to be our present truth.** Should our sisters think that they must adopt a certain style of dress, controversy would arise, **and minds which should be wholly given to the**

work of the third angel's message would spend their time making an aggressive warfare on the outward dress. This zeal, which would be regarded by some as an evidence of piety, would only be an evidence of the want of true piety, of the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. Lt 45, 1899

Christmas/New Year's

At the close of my long journey East, I reached my home in time to spend New Year's eve in Healdsburg. The College hall had been fitted up for a Sabbath-school reunion. Cypress wreaths, autumn leaves, evergreens, and flowers were tastefully arranged; and a large bell of evergreens hung from the arched doorway at the entrance to the room. The tree was well loaded with donations, which were to be used for the benefit of the poor, and to help purchase a bell. Except in a few instances, the names of the donors were not given; but appropriate Bible texts and mottoes were read as the gifts were taken down from the tree. On this occasion nothing was said or done that need burden the conscience of any one.

Some have said to me, "Sr. White, what do you think of this? Is it in accordance with our faith?" I answer them, "**It is with my faith.**" RH January 29, 1884

Tithe & Offering

Light gradually began to come in the sixties on the subject of tithing. From the very first, it was emphasized that **each one must decide what his tithe amounted to and whether he was to pay it or not. It was never made a test of fellowship.** In earlier years the tithe was used not only as salary for the ministers, but for a multitude of church expenses, both in the mission and in the homeland. However, in the early nineties, light came very

clearly from the Lord that the tithe belonged to the support of the ministry. The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts 198

I saw that the cause of God is not to be carried forward by **pressed offerings**. God does not accept such offerings. **This matter is to be left wholly to the people**. They are not to bring a yearly gift merely, but should also freely present a weekly and monthly offering before the Lord. This work is left to the people, for it is to be to them a weekly, monthly, living test. **This tithing system, I saw, would develop character, and manifest the true state of the heart**. If the brethren in Ohio have this matter presented before them in its true bearing, **and are left to decide for themselves**, they will see wisdom and order in the tithing system. 1T 237

The Daily

I have words to speak to... all who have been active in urging their views in regard to the meaning of **“the daily” of Daniel 8**. **This is not to be made a test question**, and the agitation that has resulted from its being treated as such has been very unfortunate. Confusion has resulted, and the minds of some of our brethren have been diverted from the thoughtful consideration that should have been given to the work that the Lord has directed should be done at this time in our cities. This has been pleasing to the great enemy of our work. 1SM 167

G. I. Butler

The Bible contains our creed and discipline. It thoroughly furnishes the man of God unto all good works. What it has not revealed relative to church organization and management, the duties of officers and ministers, and kindred subjects, **should not be strictly defined and drawn out into minute specifica-**

tions for the sake of uniformity, but rather be left to individual judgment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Had it been best to have a book of directions of this sort, the Spirit would doubtless have gone further, and left one on record with the stamp of inspiration upon it. Man cannot safely supplement this matter with his weak judgment. All attempts to do it in the past have proved lamentable failures. RH Nov. 27, 1883

J. H. Waggoner

The following form of a Church Covenant has been adopted by the Seventh-day Adventists: — **“We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, and covenanting to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”** Many have sought to improve this by specifying favorite points of faith; **but they have always failed.** It is possible to weaken the faith in general by an effort to strengthen it in some particulars; for when some particular point is strengthened by being mentioned, others are proportionally weakened by omission.

It is for this reason that “Articles of Faith” are always inefficient, dwarfing both the faith and the life of those who accept them. In the holy Scriptures the man of God is “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:17), and by these alone is faith developed and perfected. Rom. 10:17.

Practical Application

Those who engage in the solemn work of bearing the **third angel’s** message must move out decidedly, and in the Spirit and power of God fearlessly preach the truth and let it cut. **They should elevate the standard of truth and urge the people to come up to it.** It has too frequently been **lowered to meet the people in their condition of darkness and sin.** It is the **pointed**

testimony that will bring them up to decide. A peaceful testimony **will not do this.** The people have the privilege of listening to this kind of teaching from popular pulpits; **but those servants to whom God has entrusted the solemn, fearful message which is to bring out and fit up a people for the coming of Christ should bear a plain, pointed testimony.** Our truth is as **much more solemn than that of nominal professors, as the heavens are higher than the earth.** 1T 248

Steps Toward Apostasy (J. N. Loughborough)

1. The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe.
2. The second is, to make that creed a test of fellowship.
3. The third is to try members by that creed.
4. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed.
(CURRENT SDCR BOARD MIGHT BE HERE!)
5. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such.

I plead that we are not patterning after the churches in any unwarrantable sense, in the step proposed. ARSH October 8, 1861

Creed Questions used by Juan Contreras before Baptism (total of 40 including the 28 found within #1)

1. Do you believe, and embrace as Bible truths the 28 fundamental principles of 1889? Is it your desire by the grace of God to continue to live in harmony with these principles? **(Should not be a test)**

Do you believe and embrace:

2. That there is one true God, Jehovah, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ?
3. Do you believe that Jesus the Christ is the only begotten Son of God?

Gospel Order.

4. Is it your will to help and support your local elder, or body of elders in your congregation for the furtherance of the cause of God here on earth?
5. Do you understand that we should support the cause of God with our tithes and offerings? **(Should not be a test)**
6. Do you understand that the tithe belongs to God and is used to sustain the ministers who are laboring in the field recruiting souls for the kingdom, starting churches, training, and equipping the members of the church, and therefore it is your desire to return a faithful tithe to support such work? **(Should not be a test)**
7. That the memorial of the Lord's supper – Communion, is for the body of Christ alone, and only baptized members of such should partake of the Lord's emblems?
8. Do you believe and follow God's counsel in regards to Diet, and are you willing to faithfully continue to practice true temperance, eliminating those items that are harmful to health, and partaking of those items which are healthful with moderation? **(Should not be a test)**

9. Do you believe that God has called his children to peace, and therefore the followers of Christ should abstain from enlisting in the Military?
10. Do you believe and follow God's will in regards to Dress Reform, and is it your desire to continue to follow the principles in modesty as given to us by the spirit of God in the testimonies? **(Should not be a test)**
11. Do you understand that Christmas, Easter, and all other Holidays are of earthly origin and should not be encouraged by celebrating these as the world does? **(Should not be a test)**
12. Do you agree in not encouraging the meeting houses of SDCR to honor such holidays in her midst? **(Should not be a test)**
13. Do you understand that any violation of these biblical principles is a breaking of the covenant made with Christ and his body and can lead to organizational discipline? **(WOW!)**

Creed Questions used by Nick Ionashku before Baptism (total of 42 including the 28 found within #3)

1. Do you accept the Bible as the rule of your faith and practice?
2. Will you study to learn the truths of the Word, and practice those truths in your lives?

3. Do you understand the doctrines taught by the Seventh-day Church of Revelation, and do you believe them? (28)
(Should not be a test)
4. Have you confessed your sins to God as far as they have been made known to you, and have you on your part, as far as in you lies, tried to make matters right with your fellow men?
5. Do you claim by faith in Christ that God for Christ's sake has forgiven our past sins, and that he is yours, and you are his?
6. Do you recognize the fact that as truly as God claims the seventh part of time as his, so he claims one tenth of all our income as his for the support of his work in advancing the glorious gospel of Christ, and will you faithfully render to his own - the tithe? **(Should not be a test)**
7. Will you submit to the decisions of the body of the church in matters of church discipline? In other words, will you seek the peace, harmony, and unity of the church, rather than press an individual opinion to cause confusion in the church, which is in harmony with Volume V of the "Testimonies," page 107?
8. Will you besides this contribute of your substance as God may prosper you, for the upbuilding of the various branches of his cause? **(Should not be a test)**
9. Will you seek to build up the interests of the church by attendance upon its meetings, ordinances, and adding your influence to extend its work, while the church, on their part, exercise their watch-care over you?

10. Do you understand the principles of Christian temperance as taught by the Seventh-day Church of Revelation, and will you carry out those principles, abstaining from the use of liquors, tobacco in all its forms, coffee, tea, and swine's flesh? In short, will you truly study the subject of Bible temperance, and practice it in your life? **(Some should not be a test)**
11. In the matter of dress will you follow the Bible rule of plainness of dress (1Tim.2:9; 10; 1Peter 3:3, 4), abstaining from plumes, feathers, banging the hair, and the wearing of gold as ornaments, and "costly array," as taught it Volume VI, page 97? **(Should not be a test)**
12. Do you believe the Bible doctrine of "Spiritual Gifts," and do you understand the nature of the gift of prophesy which has been manifested through Sister E. G. White, and which has been connected with the message from its very commencement? And as far as you understand the instructions from that source, are in harmony with them? **(Should not be a test)**
13. You of course recognize all ten of the commandments as spoken from the Lord from Mount Sinai as still binding, and by God's grace will you keep those commandments, the fourth with the rest, rendering to the Lord as his sacred time the seventh day, by the world called Saturday?
14. By submission to Christ and his grace, will you seek to grow in grace as well as in the knowledge of his truth?
15. Have you been immersed (baptized) in the likeness of Christ's death, and so now walk in the new life, having been raised to the likeness of his resurrection?

Supplemental Quotes

SOP Equal to the Bible? Pioneer Quotes

Review and Herald, June 9, 1874

We believe these visions because the Bible teaches them. We use the rules given in that holy book and are forced to the conclusion that these manifestations are the work of the Spirit of God. Instead of our setting up these visions above and outside of the Scriptures as another rule of authority, as our opponents pretend, we claim that none can really take the Bible and fairly apply its teachings without accepting these visions as from God. **The Bible is the supreme authority in deciding this as well as other questions. ...**

They never claim to be given to take the place of the Bible, but simply to be a manifestation of one of those spiritual gifts set in the church by its divine Lord; and as such, should have their proper weight. ...

Seventh-day Adventists believe in these visions because the Bible teaches them. They do not make them in any sense a test of fellowship, knowing very well the prejudice which exists against everything of this kind and that the people have been witnesses to many false manifestations. They leave every one perfectly free to come to their own conclusions concerning them. They are not ashamed of these visions, but thankful to God for his care and interest in giving them, as their instructions have been of great benefit. They claim the right to believe in them and to present the reasons for such belief.

Review and Herald Supplement, Aug. 14, 1883 (G. I. Butler)

The majority of our people believe these visions to be a genuine manifestation of spiritual gifts, and as such to be entitled to respect. **We do not hold them to be superior to the Bible, or in one sense equal to it.** The Scriptures are our rule to test everything by, the visions as well as all other things. That rule, therefore, is of the highest authority; the standard is higher than the thing tested by it. **If the Bible should show the visions were not in harmony with it, the Bible would stand**, and the visions would be given up. This shows plainly that we hold the Bible the highest, our enemies to the contrary, notwithstanding.

An Explanation - Eld. U. Smith

I have always maintained the doctrine of the perpetuity of spiritual gifts, theoretically. I have believed, and do still believe, that the visions of Sister White are a practical illustration of that doctrine. **But I have not believed, as past volumes of the REVIEW will testify, that these, or, any other manifestation of spiritual gifts, stood on a level with the Scriptures, or that they should be made a test of fellowship.** I see as yet no occasion to change my views in any of these respects. When I do, I can announce it myself; and till then our opponents need not presume to speculate upon, nor interpret, my position for me.

Opposition to Truth

The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under

most discouraging, forbidding circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld must be given under **the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith.** And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us. The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps **separately and alone.** The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges.

My brother, my sister, ponder these things, I beseech you. **You have each a work to do.** Your unfaithfulness and neglect are registered against you in the Ledger of Heaven. You have diminished your powers and lessened your capabilities. You lack the experience and efficiency which you might have had. **But before it is forever too late, I urge you to arouse.** Delay no longer. **The day is almost spent.** The westering sun is about sinking forever from your sight. Yet while the blood of Christ is pleading, you may find pardon. **Summon every energy of the soul, employ the few remaining hours in earnest labor for God and for your fellow men.** 5T 463

Ellen White Letter to Brother Ings
(as though written to some of our “leaders” today)

Circa 1875

Previously unpublished.

There have been some things shown me that I feel it my duty to write for the benefit of Br. Ings and those connected with him. While my husband and myself were to be in Battle Creek, I did not feel much burden of the matter because Br. Ings would respect our advice and our testimony. But since we are to be absent from Battle Creek, we know not how long, **I feel it to be duty to write out what has been shown me in regard to his case.**

The Lord loves Br. Ings. He is a strictly conscientious man, and has the fear of God before him. His soul responds to the truth, and he desires to carry out its principles in his life. He has a true heart. But there are strong points in his character which need to be softened and refined. **He makes too much of the jots and tittles in life. He is exacting upon many things. In point of dress he is frequently too exacting.** There are matters essential and profitable to dwell upon in the theory of truth, which he may bring to bear upon his own heart and life, and the hearts and lives of others, with good account. **But when he makes small points of dress and peculiarities of dress a personal matter, he hurts his influence and injures the effect of the good he might do were he less observant and watchful of others’ conscience in these little things.** He is in danger of overstraining in these things and **making his conscience a criterion for others. Br. Ings must allow others to have a conscience** as well as himself, and he must guard himself lest his suspicion and jealousy of his brethren lead him to give place to the enemy, and he mar the very work of God he wishes earnestly to build up.

Sr. Ings has had trials in regard to these strong traits of character in her husband. While she has had the utmost confidence in his motives, **she has feared the influence of his exacting traits upon others.** Sr. Ings is more evenly balanced in this respect than her husband.

Br. Ings, unless constantly balanced by minds that are more evenly organized, will be in **danger of carrying things too far, and being an extremist. He is in danger of judging other mens' consciences and binding upon others exacting burdens that God does not bind.** As a people we have an unpopular faith which separates us from the world. We should be exceedingly cautious that we do not place ourselves, in our sympathies and views, **so far from the world that we cannot reach them. Christ's example is our pattern. His sympathies were identified with suffering humanity.** He reached the sinful, helpless, and needy where they were, and He makes their necessities His own. **There is danger of closing the door of access to souls by some exacting traits of character, which have an influence upon them of burdening restraint which they cannot for a moment think of enduring.**

The great principles of truth should be our subject; the worth of souls our burden. **When souls are converted to the truth it commences to guide the conscience, gradually molding it, purifying, refining, and ennobling the life.** But there is danger of wanting to gauge other mens' opinions and views to our standard, when that standard may be very defective. Let the principles of truth suitably affect the heart and life and it will do the work of purifying and separating from the world. Br. Ings, I know, needed an experience in his religious life that he had not yet gained. **He was severe in his criticism upon others, distrustful and jealous of the course of others unless they came in the channel of his ideas.** If these defects could be seen and corrected, the influence of Br. Ings would be a greater blessing than it could be if he continued to view matters as he has done.

Straight testimonies are needed, but God must choose His instruments who can judiciously and wisely reprove wrongs and correct the erring. It is not everyone who has the judgment and

discretion to reprove and counsel. They will be so apt to make their own views and feelings paramount when their neighbors' consciences may be even more correct than the one who would set himself up as a reprovor.

Never should we make items of dress a test of faith if the Christian character is in other respects consistent. These things will come in order without being crowded. The Lord would not have us crowd and press anyone. "My sheep," says Christ, "hear My voice and they follow Me." [John 10:27.] **The voice of Christ woos and charms but does not command. You are too ready to bear down upon others to censure. You do not cultivate that winning manner, that loving spirit, that Jesus manifested. You must seek to win souls, for you can never compel them.** Said the apostle who died for his faith, "I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some." [1 Corinthians 9:22.] The salvation of the soul is precious. You must not repulse; you must not make yourself objectionable by your stern manners and by being so very set in your own way. Come just as near others as you can and yet preserve your integrity.

Br. Ings, you need to cherish a kindly spirit. You should have words of encouragement for others. You should seek to bless and brighten their pathway. You should not cast a shadow of gloom. **You should be cautious that you do not make the question of diet and dress essential to salvation.** You may exalt the truth; you may exalt the law of God and exalt faith in Jesus Christ. These are vital points of truth. Diet and dress have their place, **but they are not by any means to be made foremost and the prominent features of our religious faith.** These are lesser duties. They must be handled with the greatest caution and **must not be made a testing question.**

You abominate pride and a superficial character, but you must hide your strong feelings and not be ready to express your peculiar views and your strong feelings of disgust. **You have a right to your opinion, but you have no right to force this opinion upon others.** Your strong position has been a great hindrance to your wife. She might have been driven away from the truth where she could not

be reached, had not God in His great mercy reached down His arm in love and pitying tenderness to draw her to Himself. You need both to be guarded and not be too ready to see the errors and failings of others.

God will make you a blessing to others if you seek to be right with Him, and do not try to fix others over too much to meet your ideas. May God help you to leave others to God unless He gives you a word of encouragement to brighten their pathway. You may be a comfort and live in the hearts of your brethren. But Br. Ings must not take too much upon himself in seeking to set others right. This is not the work God has for him to do. He should look well to his own case, lay aside his suspicion and his jealousy, and see that he has the precious love and pitying tenderness that dwelt in the bosom of Jesus. This he needs to cultivate. All the rough edges and harsh surface must be removed by the planing knife of God. He must be right with God in seeking to be imbued with the gentleness of Christ. He is not in the way of duty in reproofing, in making cutting remarks, in reining up others to his standard, and in making man an offender for a word. This is not the work God has given him to do.

Br. Ings, you should soften your spirit and be less stern, and be less severe and less exacting or you will be a burden to the church instead of a help. You do not do justice to yourself, my brother. There are but few men who, beneath the surface, have a more tender, pitiful heart than yourself. You have received false ideas of duty, and stern duty you have thought demanded of you what God has not really required. Your manners must soften. You do not deserve the name of a stern, hard man, for you are not so at heart. Your words and your sternness belie the truly soft and tender love of your heart. **This sternness and exacting in your intercourse with others is not required of you.** Lay it off, Br. Ings. Love itself is the element to be mingled in all your duties from God.

Do not feel compelled to rein yourself up to appear to others what you are not in reality. Cultivate a kindly expression of voice. You should throw into it a little more smoothness, make it a little more

musical, and not so dictatorial, not overbearing. Let the music of love tone and moderate your voice to reach the heart rather than to repel and close the avenues of the soul against your influence. There are many men and women who have few enough kindly, loving words spoken to them. Few words of sympathy have ever fallen upon their ears. Speak sympathizingly to others and you will find your words cherished. Kind, loving words will subdue and break the hardest hearts and secure to you friends lasting and true. You must not rein up souls to your ideas. You peck at little things in point of dress and controvert the dress of your wife. You weary her patience needlessly and make points and raise issues that are not essential. You press and wound and grieve needlessly. God would have you reform upon these points, and allow others to have a conscience in regard to their diet and dress as well as yourself.

You are cultivating a spirit of watching and judging others which makes your labors very objectionable. You have not erred intentionally. God's love is toward you. But all defects in your character must be remedied and your life be faultless before God. (I read this testimony for it correctly describes the case of others.)
Ms 6, 1875

Please contact us with any inquiries about this topic.

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1872 Fundamental Principles

Preamble

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.

Steps Toward Apostasy

1. The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe.
2. The second is, to make that creed a test of fellowship.
3. The third is to try members by that creed.
4. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed.
5. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such.