

THE TRUTH  
IN WORD AND WORK



AN AMISH BROTHERHOOD PUBLICATION

# **THE TRUTH**

## **In Word and Work**

A Statement of Faith

By Ministers and Brethren of

Amish Churches of Holmes Co., Ohio,

and Related Areas

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## PREFACE

This booklet is the result of a combined effort of ministers and brethren of the Amish Church.

For those who are not acquainted with the Amish, it may be necessary to explain that they are the most conservative segment of what is known as the Mennonite Church. They are direct descendants of the reformers of the early 1500's, known as Anabaptists. The Anabaptists felt that such reformers as Luther, Zwingli, and others compromised on certain points and were not thorough in bringing the church back to a Scriptural foundation. The Anabaptists differed especially with the popular reformers in that they rejected infant baptism and insisted that the church was to be a voluntary brotherhood of adult believers. They began to teach and practice separation of church and state, an idea otherwise unheard of in those days. For three centuries these Anabaptists were severely persecuted by both Protestant and Catholic authorities.

The word Amish comes from the name of Jacob Amman, an influential Anabaptist leader of the late 1600's and early 1700's. He was important in Mennonite history because he insisted on maintaining a pure church, non-conformity to the world, and a stricter discipline in a period of time when a certain degree of laxness was evident.

We, the Amish, take a position in our day and society in harmony with that of our heritage. It is more than tradition as many would think. It is the conviction received from an understanding of the Word of God. It is with respect and appreciation that we recognize that our interpretation and application of the Scriptures has remained basically the same for more than 400 years, though in the face of persecution and adversity.

We hasten to acknowledge though, that our society is not a perfect one. We have failed as humans do in that not everyone at all times who identifies with us has been true to our sincere aspirations to follow the Word of God. We have not been totally unaffected in the areas of materialism, affluence, acculturation, and worldliness. God has been merciful to us and we are not consumed. Hence, we desire to once again in our day make an expression of our beliefs, and how we apply the principles of the Word of God in life. This writing, though brief and by no means exhaustive, may be best understood and appreciated by the common people of society today.

This writing is not intended to replace any former confession of faith. It is to currently substantiate and clarify to ourselves, to oncoming generations, and to the world around us what is the doctrinal position and understanding of our brotherhood. In doing this we would not exalt ourselves and our heritage, but exclusively the Word of God.

It is our constant aim to build upon the only true foundation. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 3:11) This is a key scripture used throughout our past. You will find in these writings a concise description of the materials used in building upon this true foundation. We confess that the Head, (Christ) needs a body (the church) to carry out His will and purpose on earth. So also the foundation, (Christ) is incomplete without a building firmly set upon it, made of such materials as the gold, silver, and precious stones of the Word of God.

Our sincere desire is that while living in the threat of nuclear catastrophe and in perilous times, the people of God may find refuge, comfort, and peace through a way of life as taught in the enduring Word of God, to which these writings testify and exhort.

May this mutual effort bring the restless soul to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. May it encourage the lover of the Truth to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3) May it stimulate crossbearing and discipleship, whereby the world can see the true meaning of being a follower of the Lord God.

Finally, if the good seed of the Gospel falls upon good ground and bears much fruit, so that our Father in Heaven is glorified and His kingdom enlarged, our efforts will be rewarded.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Hebrews 13:20, 21)

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## THE BIBLE

This booklet will continually base its claims for authority on the Bible. It is only fitting that first we focus on the Bible as a subject in itself.

It is true, God does in limited ways show his designs and divinity in His creation. (Rom. 1:19, 20; I Cor. 11:14) But without the Bible, all mankind would remain ignorant of the most essential and saving Truth.

The Bible, or Word, is divinely-inspired, infallible, the ultimate revelation of God, and the only and final authority for all mankind. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3:16, 17)

In the Old Testament there are many phrases such as "thus saith the Lord", "the word of the Lord," "and the Lord said," "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord," declaring the Bible to be the actual Word of God. It is not a writing of "cunningly devised fables," but rather a "more sure word of prophecy." God himself wrote the Ten Commandments with his finger in tables of stone. The Apostle Peter in the New Testament explains how it was written, "...prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (I Pet. 1:21)

Paul also writes clearly in the New Testament, the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (I Cor. 14:37) ". . . when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God. . ." (I Thess. 2:13) He also quotes Luke's Gospel, verifying it as "For the scripture saith," [I Tim. 5:18) Peter indicates that Paul's writings are classified as Scripture. (II Pet. 3:15-16)

The Scripture bears witness of itself. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Mark 13:31) ". . . Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4)

The Bible is the inspired (God-breathed) Word of God. One needs to reverently read it to gain this insight. The crown of its

entire design is that the Eternal Word became flesh, lived among mankind, and was broken for the redemption of man. Sublime divine truth!

The Word is the seed whereby the Christian is born again. (James 1:18; I Peter 1:23; John 5:24) All saving faith has its roots in the Word. (Rom. 10:17) This makes it authoritative for the Christian. All other gospels are accursed. (Gal. 1) The Word is the agent for our sanctification. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3; John 17:17) It makes one "wise into salvation." ". . . There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) The Word of God is the measure by which we will be judged in the last day. (John 12:48)

Some men question, claiming all the proof given is derived from the Book itself. How can it be determined that it is not biased?

In searching all the religious writings of the world for anything comparable to the Ten Commandments, no equal is found. The clear and just foundation of all good law and order is found in them. But even the Ten Commandments were excelled by a far greater truth when Christ, the Eternal Word, became flesh, and taught the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5, 6, 7). The Sermon on the Mount penetrates and discerns the very thoughts and motives of man. No other book presents the divine concept of the close relationship of Creator with Creation, with man in particular, as does the Bible.

No where else in all the world is there a book that was 1600 years in the making, written by over 30 men, yet having such harmony. Prophecies contained in the Bible were often hundreds and sometimes thousands of years in being fulfilled to the letter, in totally new generations. This alone is proof of its infallibility.

The prophecy in Genesis 3:15 of bruising Satan's head was fulfilled four thousand years later, (Heb. 2:14) and is proof of the authenticity of the Bible. Compare God's promise to Abraham "...In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3) with Galatians 3:14. The pattern that Moses received on Mt. Sinai of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:40) was a prophecy in a figure of the work of Christ. See Hebrews 8:5; 9:23; and 10:19-21.

The fulfillment of other prophecies, not concerning Christ, but

of the fate of nations, cities, and people also show the inspiration of the Scriptures.

This is the only record down through the ages that consistently acknowledges only one God, God as a Spirit-Person, compassionate, yet just Creator "of the world and all things therein." (John 1; Acts 17) The Scriptures bear out the divine truth that God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. This again, sets the Bible in a class by itself. All other books are but as candles and mirrors in the light of the sun. Where else is there such an utterance as found in John 3:16? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The final proof though, is in its power to change the lives of those who pursue its truth. The weight of influence it carries all over the world is like none other. Other religions copy from it, twist some of its truth, or camouflage and modify it, but let man give himself to its pure truth and he will become the child of its Author. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17)

No other book has such a consistent call to holiness. (Lev. 19:2; I Pet. 1:16) Here is an unmatched call to conversion and constant holiness. See Philipians 2:5 and I Peter 1:15.

It is necessary to understand what the Bible is about. It consists of two Testaments, the Old and the New. The Old begins with creation, then the call to worship the one only true God. It shows the beginning of a chosen people, their struggles, their psalms and proverbs, climaxing in the age of the prophets, who warned them when they became wicked. It also prophesied of the kingdom of God in the New Testament dispensation.

The New Testament is Christ centered, revealing his birth, ministry, teachings, sacrificial death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. It relates the account of his Body (the Church), to the apostolic epistles following, exhorting men to live the Christian life, ending with a book of prophecy concerning Jesus Christ and the Church, relating to time and eternity.

While Moses was the central figure in the Old Testament, so is Christ in the New. (John 1:17) The New is the covenant effective

for God's people in the present day. It is the better covenant and fulfills the Old. It is the covenant of grace, that is, the kingdom of God among us.

## **GOD**

The Holy Scriptures do not attempt to prove the existence of God; they simply assume His existence. The Bible informs us that there is sufficient evidence for the belief in God, and that only a fool would doubt His existence. (Psa. 14:1; 53:1) "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." (Psa. 19:1) See also Romans 1:20.

There are many reasons for belief in God. All over the face of the earth one finds in the minds of people an awareness of a Supreme Being. Men everywhere have a natural desire to worship something. Their gods may be wood and stone, yet the inclination to worship is present. Some worship and know not what, as in John 4:22; others worship ignorantly. (Acts 17:23) Nevertheless they worship; the thought of God is universal. There is a universal religious instinct in the human race. This religious instinct and desire to worship is evidence that God exists.

Much can also be learned by observing His creation. The orderly function of the universe, the precise arrangement and movement of the planets in space, and the habits and instincts of the animal world are all things that did not "just happen" or "evolve." They were divinely planned by an all-wise Creator. All nature and the delicate structure of the human body abound with evidences which can be accounted for only by faith in this same Creator. "...For I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psa. 139:14a)

Men have spent many years of research, labored and lectured extensively, endeavoring to explain the origin of life and man, and the existence of the universe apart from a Supreme Being. Such reasoning is mere theory, based upon vain human speculation. How much more refreshing and satisfying are the statements of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) "So God created man in his own image. . ." (Gen. 1:27; 2:7) Believing by faith, we understand that God made the world. (Heb. 11:3)

We have a great and wonderful God. Moreover, He is righteous, holy, faithful, loving and merciful, as well as a God of justice. Unlike His creatures, He has no time limitations. He always was, and always will be. ". . .From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Psa. 90:2) See also Genesis 21:33 and Revelation 1:8. His infinite power was manifested in the creation. He spoke and things came into existence. He is omnipotent. He has unlimited power and authority. "...For with God all things are possible." (Mark 10:27) See also Revelation 19:6 and Isaiah 40:12-18 God has provided for the existence and destiny of all His creatures. Even now He stretches forth His mighty arm and the earth trembles in earthquakes, storms, and other manifestations of His power. In the day of the Lord, according to his promise, the heavens and the earth which are now shall be dissolved, and new heavens and a new earth shall be created. (II Pet. 3:7, 13; Isa. 65:17)

As God is in power, so is He also in wisdom and knowledge; He is omniscient. ". . . For I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them." (Ezek. 11:5; also Isa. 40:13, 14) He knows the things that are past, the things now present, and the things of the future. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33a) See also Psalm 139:1-6.

The Scriptures also present God as being omnipresent. (Psa. 139:6-12) This is beyond human comprehension. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord." (Jer. 23:24a) "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20) "I am with you always . . . . . (Matt. 28:20) The omnipresence of God is both a warning and a comfort. A warning that we do not partake of any evil, and a comfort to know that wherever we are, He is there with us.

The Godhead exists in three beings: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. At times it may seem that these act with some degree of independence of each other. Yet there is but one God (Isa. 45:22; Mark 12:29) who abides in a distinctive threefold personality. The concept of the Trinity is specifically given in Matt. 28:19, where baptism is to be administered in "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." At the baptism of Christ, (Matt. 3) Jesus was there in person, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, and the

Father spoke from heaven. Each of these three beings is distinctly and personally recognized as God: the Father as "God" in John 3:16 and I Peter 1:3; the Son as "God" in Isaiah 9:6 and Hebrews 1:8; and the Holy Spirit as "God" in Acts 5:3-4.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit is one of the three beings of the Godhead proceeding from the Father and the Son. (John 15:26) He is the power through whom the Father and the Son operate. He was present when heaven and earth and all heavenly hosts were made. (Gen. 1:2, 26) He searcheth out the deep things of God and knows what is in God. (I Cor. 2:10-11) Not only is he in perfect harmony with the Father and the Son in will, in words, and in works, but also in essence a part of the eternal and unfathomable Godhead.

The Holy Spirit is the power of God, who with his divine inspiration draws, enkindles, and illuminates the heart of man. Christ said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive...." (John 14:16-17) He shall not speak of himself; But whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. This almighty, eternal Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son at Pentecost, as of a rushing, mighty wind. He appeared as cloven tongues of fire and sat upon each of them. (Acts 2:2, 4) This same Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary, and that holy thing which was born of her was called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35) The Holy Spirit, sent from the Father, is given to be the believer's teacher in all things. (John 14:26) He is the begetting force which gathers the church. The brotherhood of the reborn is to be subject to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as in Acts 15:28. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us. . ." The Holy Spirit teaches us all truth through the Word of God, and is confirmed by the brotherhood of the reborn. This brotherly endeavor, as people of God being bound by God's covenant in the spirit of regeneration, is ruled by the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures bear record of the Holy Spirit. Christ said in John 6:63, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The Holy Spirit illuminates through revealing the written Word. Inspirations contrary to the Word of God are

not of the Holy Spirit. Man cannot claim to live in harmony with the Holy Spirit while some sphere of his life is carnal. The abiding presence of the Spirit can only exist where he rules one's life. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38) He is a creative spirit that is a molding power within, whose material is the whole of life including its outward expression. The Spirit is not merely reason nor emotions. A professed relationship with God based on human senses and emotion does not result in holy living.

The Spirit requires an unrestricted commitment to discipleship. The Holy Spirit is given to them that obey him. (Acts 5:32) Discipleship that is lightly esteemed is a lying to the Holy Ghost and an instrument unto death as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-10)

As the spirits of darkness have dominion over this world, so does the Holy Spirit have dominion over God's kingdom. This kingdom consists of believers who have the Holy Spirit baptism, which occurs as a man is born again. Spirit baptism is defined as "being overwhelmed" (i.e., to be put under subjection). Where this subjection continues in the brotherhood and effects consensus of belief, the baptism of the Holy Spirit prevails.

Christ's teachings of forgiveness, self-surrender, and love extended to our enemies, as taught on the Sermon on the Mount, can only be lived out by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

To be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6) "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:14, 16) "He who has not the Spirit of Christ is none of his." (Rom. 8:9) We are not to quench nor grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Eph. 4:30; I Thess. 5:19) The Holy Spirit of promise is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. (Eph. 1:14)

This spirit can not be divided. He manifests himself in diversities of gifts, yet there is but one spirit. "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body... and have been all made to drink into one spirit." (I Cor. 12:11, 13) There is one body, and one spirit. (Eph. 4:4)

"...The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23b, 24)

## **ANGELS**

Angels are created beings. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." (Col. 1:16; Gen. 2:1) They have a position and purpose distinctly different from that of man. Although they are supernatural and spiritual beings, (Heb. 1:14) they have often revealed themselves unto man in a bodily form when conveying messages to God's servants. (Acts 27:23) Jesus taught that angels do not marry, nor do they die. They are created as an entire host, and do not multiply as a race. (Luke 20:34-36; Gen. 2:1) The Scripture shows that they are not omniscient, although their position is higher than that of man. (Heb. 2:7) "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matt. 24:36) The angels are also greater in power than man. "Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might. . ." (II Pet. 2:11) There are a vast number of angels. John said, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne ... and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." (Rev. 5:11)

The angels were created holy, (Gen. 1:31) as God's servants, but some fell from their first estate through a deliberate, self-determined rebellion against God. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." (II Pet. 2:4) While fallen man is given a chance to repent, or be reinstated into God's favor, fallen angels are doomed to everlasting fire. (Jude 6)

The holy angels stand in the presence of God and worship him, ". . . their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10) See also Revelation 5:11 and Hebrews 1:6. They assist and protect God's people. (Gen. 19:11; Psa. 91:11; Dan. 3:28) "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14)

They help God to execute His will, and to punish His enemies. (Acts 12:23; II Sam. 24:16) The law was given through the ministration of angels. ". . . and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." (Gal. 3:19) Angels will accompany Christ, and have an important role when He will return to judge the world. (Matt. 25:31)

The evil angels oppose God and try to defeat his will and frustrate his plans. (II Cor. 11: 14; 12:7) The Scriptures show that holy angels will continue in the service of God in the future. The evil angels will have their part in the lake of fire. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41)

## **SATAN**

Satan is the chief of the fallen spirits, the adversary of God and man. The first and second chapter of Job, and Zechariah 3:1-2 designate Satan as a personality. In the New Testament we find the nature of Satan more fully revealed. He is often called, "the devil." (Matt. 4:1; Luke 4:2; John 8:44) Other titles applied to him are: "accuser of the brethren," (Rev. 12:10) "adversary," (I Pet. 5:8) "Beelzebub," (Matt. 12:24) "The father of lies," (John 8:44) "the god of this world," (II Cor. 4:4) "the prince of this world," (John 12:31; 14:30) "the prince of the power of the air." (Eph. 2:2) These varied descriptions of Satan indicate his character and position.

Christ gives an authoritative description of his moral nature in calling him, "the wicked one." (Matt. 13:19, 38) His basic attribute is moral evil. Christ's words in John 8:44 give the fullest description of his character: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." "The devil sinneth from the beginning," is the statement in I John 3:8. Evil is the very environment and nature of the devil or Satan.

The origin of Satan is not explicitly given in Scripture. However we conclude from John 8:44 that he is a fallen being. Paul in I Timothy 3:6 indicates that he fell under God's condemnation due to pride. God created heaven and earth and all the inhabitants

thereof, and called it good. The "all things" of John 1:3 therefore include Satan. God apparently created Satan as an angel of light. Through pride he fell into sin and was cast out of heaven. We believe that Ezekiel 28:12-16 refers to Satan when he says . . ."Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou has been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering ... the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee... therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire." Also Isaiah 14:12-15 gives apparent reference to him. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

Satan has a great desire to be worshipped. (Matt. 4:9) In his fall he drew a large number of lesser celestial beings with him. (Rev. 12:4) Satan is the ruler of an evil kingdom that is opposed to the kingdom of God. (Luke 11:18) He directs a host of wicked spirits who do his bidding. (Matt. 25:41; Eph. 2:2; 6:12) Although he is not omnipresent, he makes his influence world wide through himself and his subordinates. He also has dominion over the world of lost humanity. He is the prince of this world, (John 12:31) that is the evil world-system which he has organized upon his own perverted principles. (II Cor. 4:3, 4; Col. 1:13; I John 2:15-17) Although he is powerful, he still is limited and can be overcome by remaining true to the Word of God, and by the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 12:11)

Satan is engaged in an age-long struggle against God, seeking to defeat God's plan of grace toward mankind, He also is seeking to seduce man to evil and his ruin, often transforming him-

self into an angel of light. (II Cor. 11:14) His basic method is deception--about himself, his purpose, and his coming defeat. He functions in the realm of darkness, ruling over it, always seeking to deceive man and keep him in darkness and condemnation. A careful reading of Genesis 3 will bear this out. Note, especially, that Adam and Eve's eyes were opened, and they saw that they were deceived and naked, knowing good and evil. In this manner, Satan found his way into the lives of all mankind. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) He snatches away the Word of God sown in the hearts of the unsaved, (Matt. 13:19) and has his counterfeit Christians among the sons of God. (Matt. 13:41) These counterfeits come with covetousness and feigned words, or as angels of light, and promise liberty while they themselves are the servants of corruption. (II Cor.11:13, 14; II Pet. 2:3, 19)

Satan seeks to rule in man, and fill his life with pride, envy, jealousy, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life. Many persons have been ruined by Satan to be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:48). He is in fierce conflict with the saints and is ever alert in his attempt to destroy them. (I Pet. 5:8) Although he will destroy if permitted, yet he can be resisted and overcome by putting on the whole armor of God. (Eph. 6:11-18)

Since Satan is judged, he is under condemnation and doomed to hell forever. (John 12:31-33) "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Rev. 20:10) Satan is barred from heaven forever, along with all ungodliness and unrighteousness. Read I Corinthians 6:10, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:5, and Revelation 22:15. "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:27)

### **MAN**

The Psalmist asks the question, "What is man that thou are mindful of him..." He answers, "For thou halt made him a little

lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Psa. 8:4-6)

In the first chapter of Genesis, we have the account of God's work of creation. On the sixth day God came to the climax of His creation, when He said, "...Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them." (Gen. 1:26-27) "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7) By this we understand when and how man was created, and that he consists of spirit, soul, and body. (I Thess. 5:23)

Man made in the image of God, was created to live forever and was not subject to sickness, pain, and death.

The purpose of man when he was placed into the Garden of Eden was to dress it and to keep it, that is, to care for the things of God. Man's duty is yet the same.

Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden with the command from God that they could eat of every tree in the garden, except of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, lest they would surely die. (Gen. 2:16, 17) By this it is understood that man has the power to choose God's will for himself. He can know, love, fear, and obediently serve his Creator, or can voluntarily and disobediently forsake God. (Gen. 4:7; Rev. 22:17)

Since all souls belong to God by virtue of creation (Ezekiel 18:4), man is responsible to Him. Therefore man is accountable to God for his sojourn here on earth.

Man failed in his purpose, when Satan came in the form of a serpent, and tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. Eve yielded when she saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and was told it would make one wise. She looked, desired, took, ate, and was deceived. She gave to Adam and he also ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Their eyes were opened and they became self-conscious of their

nakedness which caused fear and guilt. That is, they were guilty before a holy and righteous God, losing righteousness and true holiness. Their fellowship with God was now severed, and they were subject to pain, sickness, death and were banished from the Garden of Eden.

Through this one transgression, the nature of all succeeding generations became sinful. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..." (Rom. 5:19; 3:23; 5:12)

God gave the promise of a coming saviour, before He pronounced punishment upon man. (Gen. 3:15) To the woman He said, ". . . in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." To the man, He said, ". . . cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3:16-19)

Sin is an evil condition of the heart. (Matt. 5:21-28). Man and his descendants in this lost condition are without hope and cannot save themselves. (Eph. 2:12)

Jesus Christ being foreordained, was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and gave himself a living sacrifice for fallen man. (I John 3:8; 2:12) He is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:29; 1:9)

Therefore by the grace of God, man is able to respond to Jesus Christ through the drawing of the Spirit of God and find salvation for his soul. He can accept the offering of grace or he can resist, reject, and neglect it. He is again able to be redeemed from his sins through Christ Jesus.

Man in his redeemed state is able to be in fellowship with God again, being part of His family. Man redeemed, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and ". . . has put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:22) Although a child of God, he is still beset with the effects of the fall in that he has the fleshly nature to contend with. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh

....." (Gal. 5:17) This conflict will be with him until death takes him out of this mortal body. "For we are saved by hope ..... (Rom. 8:24) So we with patience wait for the redemption of our body.

### **GOD'S PROVISION FOR MAN, THE GIFT OF JESUS CHRIST**

When we think of the lost condition of man and what God has done, and is doing for him, the amazing grace and unerring wisdom of God become manifest. Although man came into enmity with God, he nevertheless possessed a soul that was worth saving. God's love was a yearning force which did not rest until man was again able to be renewed into the image of him that created him. Before the foundation of the world, God was prepared to overcome this enmity. "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you." (I Pet. 1:20)

Already in the Garden of Eden, God promised a saviour when he said to the serpent. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15) Mankind in general continued in his sinful ways, nations were built, and the wickedness of man kept increasing.

In this setting, God called out Abraham to be the head of a chosen people through whom he would work out his plan of redemption. God gave to Abraham the promise of Christ, saying, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3; 26:4)

At the time of Moses, He entered into a covenant with his people, and delivered the law to them as a condition for life. This covenant was one of holiness, severity and justice, where absolute obedience was required. (James 2:10) It was an expression of the character and will of God set forth as the only standard of righteousness acceptable to him in that dispensation. Man was without power to fully conform to this standard because of the sinful nature inherited from the fall of Adam. Man in his sinful nature is unable to please God, "because the carnal mind is enmity against God...." (Rom. 8:3, 7)

Therefore, man was under the bondage of fear, and under the curse. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. 3:10) The law could not save, but only made man aware of his sinfulness, and condemned him as unrighteous, (Rom. 7:9-11; Gal. 3:3) and made him aware of his need of a saviour outside of himself. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect... But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." Heb. 10:1, 3-4) "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20) The law only intensifies sin and shows man his lost condition.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. (Gal. 3:24)

After having proved man's insufficiency, God was ready to make a new covenant with his people, one of grace and mercy, where man could receive of God what he could not attain by himself. Through Jeremiah he said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ... But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people, And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31, 33-34)

Important features of this covenant are: It was to be written in the heart of man, transforming him into a new creature. (II Cor. 3:3; 5:17) God would be very near and intimate to his people, as he would dwell in their midst. This covenant would provide the perfect sacrifice of Christ, which would purge the conscience, which the animal sacrifices could not do, and thus were sacrificed over and over. (Heb. 7:26-27; 9:13-14, 25-26)

Down through the Old Testament time the prophecies of this divine deliverer were given, over a period of hundreds of years, by various writers, and in different places. These sayings have all been faithfully fulfilled in Jesus Christ. (II Pet. 1:19-21)

Christ fulfilled the promise of a prophet like unto Moses. (Deut. 18:15-18) The prophecy of the place of his birth was fulfilled: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." (Micah 5:2a) The time of his birth, (Dan. 9:24-25) and of being conceived of a virgin was fulfilled in Christ: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14) He was the promised redeemer of his people. "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." (Isa. 42:6, 7) He was promised to rise from the dead. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm.16:10)

The faithful fulfillment of all the events foretold concerning the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ leaves us without a doubt that the promises of God are yea and amen in him, on which we can lay a firm hold.

We then look to Christ as God's perfect provision for man's sin. God in his holiness had to bring judgment on sin, for his holy nature could not condone sin, but his mercy and love could also not leave man in his lost state. We find there was only one way that these demands could be met, and this was by God's Son in his holy and sinless state coming on earth and taking on himself the likeness of sinful flesh. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. 8:3)

We believe that the virgin Mary received the message from the angel of God, and believed it, being overshadowed by the power of God, and conceived of the Holy Spirit, the true, real Word (or Son of God) which was from the beginning with God. The same through the power of God, became flesh and was born of her.

The eternal and only begotten Son of God became a visible man, subject to suffering. (Luke 1:30-33)

He hungered, thirsted, was wearied with walking, sighed and wept, so that the eternal son of the living God did not continue in an invisible, immortal, and spiritual form, but for our sakes, thought it not a prize to be grasped to be equal with God, but humbled himself into a visible, submissive, mortal form. He became like unto man in all things except sin, in order to save us from everlasting torment. He who could have had joy with the Father, and was surrounded by eternal riches in heaven, became poor for our sakes. Suffering on the cross, He despised the shame, so that we through his poverty might become rich. Thus we believe that Christ Jesus is God and man in one person, and was able to bridge the wide chasm which was between the Holy God and sinful man. For God laid our sins on Him and He made atonement for them, because He was sinless. (Isa. 53:6). God then also imputes to us righteousness, by faith in him, so that we can be acceptable to God through Christ.

In the time while He was in the flesh, He not only by words, but also by works and deeds, set a holy and godly example, for us to observe and to follow. In His youth He was subject to His earthly father and mother, and in His ministry He entered into full obedience toward His heavenly Father. He made the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the blind to see, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, forgave men their sins, and promised eternal life to those who believed on him. He thereby fulfilled the prophecies and the law and established a righteousness that was pleasing unto the Father. By testifying against their sins, He incurred the wrath of the scribes and pharisees, who out of hatred and envy delivered Him into the hands of Pilate. He was mocked, spat in His face, smitten, scourged and crowned with thorns. Finally he was nailed on a cross between two thieves and left to die. In His suffering he called out, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," proving to the world that even in death he loved His enemies. After His death they pierced His side with a spear, so that blood and water flowed out there from. At His death the sun lost its brightness, and darkness came upon all the earth, the earth quaked, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. After His resurrection many bodies of the saints arose from their graves, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Read Luke 23,

John 19, and Matthew 27.

As in the time of His life, suffering, and death He showed that He was man, so He also showed that He was truly God, in that death could not hold Him, but had power to raise up the broken temple of His body in three days by the glory of the Father. He will now die no more, neither will death have any more dominion over Him; But He shall live and rule as a reigning King of Kings and Lord of Lords forever and ever.

After His resurrection He revealed Himself to His apostles and others, forty days, eating with them, and spake with them of many things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Then in the presence of the apostles He was taken up to heaven in a cloud. (Acts 1:9-10) He sat down on the right hand of God in heaven. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24)

The Son of God came into the world to proclaim unto man through the Gospel, the full counsel and will of God, which has been hid from the beginning of the world, according to which all the children of God are required to live and walk.

He fulfilled the Levitical Priesthood. and by His one offering on the cross, He provided access into the Holy of Holies; and, through His one offering he fulfilled and finished the sacrifice of the law, which all were a shadow of the true, and obtained an eternal redemption. He is become the believers only Advocate, Mediator, High Priest, and Intercessor with God.

As a king over his kingdom, He taught His followers not I use revenge, but to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them. He armed His people with the armor of God only, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Christ, while He was yet on earth with His disciples promised them that if He will depart, He will send the comforter unto them, which is the Holy Spirit, that He may abide with them forever. The Holy Spirit, which was with the Father all eternity, and is a part of the triune God, was at the time Pentecost poured out upon the believers, and they were filled with Him. This was the fulfillment of the new covenants of God dwelling in and among his people. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19; II Cor. 6:16; I Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:22)

Some of the work of the Holy Spirit in the new dispensation is the following: "He shall testify of me" (Christ). "He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment. He shall lead into all truth. Read John 14, 15, and 16.

This Spirit dwelling within the believer is the enabling power, and source of all Christian virtues that manifest themselves in the life of him who walks in obedience to the Word of God. Thus bringing forth in his life the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, as a complete whole. His words and actions are motivated by love for God and his fellow men. He is drawn into a meek and humble life, free from pride and self-seeking, being in firm control of his passions, having an inward peace and joy by resting on the promises of God through faith, patiently enduring affliction.

### **MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD**

Through Jesus Christ, God in His grace has provided a way for man to be reconciled to Himself. He made it possible that our sins may be forgiven through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. (I Pet. 1:3)

Even though this grace is available to all men, it does not belong to man or help him unless he meets the conditions God's Word sets forth. "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." (Heb. 4:2b) The first condition on which man approaches God is faith. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6)

Whence comes this true faith? It comes from God through the Word. "So faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17) Also see Ephesians 2:9. It comes by the grace of God when man, by his own will, accepts the drawing of the heavenly Father. (John 6:44)

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1) Faith is a trust and a confidence of the heart that God is true and faithful. It relies not on man, but on the promises and provisions of God. It is the arm by which man reaches out and makes the things of God his own.

Not all faith and acknowledging of God will save man. "Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well, the devils also believe and tremble." (James 2:19) The true, saving faith which brings justification and life is known by what it believes and by the fruit it brings.

By faith man understands that the wrath and severity of God are upon his lost condition. Saving faith acknowledges that we are unable to save ourselves. This brings a fear and respect of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov. 1:7)

Saving faith is known in that it believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. (I John 5:13) It believes that the life of Christ is our perfect example and His death and resurrection are our perfect atonement, satisfying the Father's justice and expressing His love and grace. It believes that in Christ we are acceptable to the Father, free from the wrath which was over us. (John 3:36) It believes in the Word as inspired from God and seeks to obey it.

The true faith which is acceptable to God and helps man is known by the repentance, confession, and restitution it brings. The faith of Zacchaeus proved to be a saving faith as he came out of the tree, took Jesus into his house, repented of his life, confessed his sins, and was willing to make restitution for the wrongs done to his fellowman. When a man truly repents, he is willing to be reconciled to his fellow man, and makes right what he has wronged.

What are "fruits meet for repentance," as John required of the Jews? Repentance renounces our own way of doing and our former life. It sorrows over past sins and turns around and follows Christ. It brings amendment of life. Where there is no turning around and changing of ways there is no repentance, but only selfish regret which does not help man. (II Cor. 7:10) Without repentance there is no forgiveness of sins.

Of confession we read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9) "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10) "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whosoever confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Prov. 28:13)

True faith, which lays hold on Christ, is that which makes a man "lose his life," that is, give up his own will and thinking. It takes up the cross and follows Christ. (Matt. 16:24; John 12:24, 25)

Faith must result in obedience, as Abraham when he went to sacrifice Isaac, and as Noah who obeyed and built the ark. See Hebrews 11. Our obedience in the dispensation of grace is to the Word of God, and to the Church, both of which express the will of God for us. So then, a man in true faith, seeks baptism into the visible body, the Church. As Peter preached at Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...." (Mark 16:16) The believer also seeks to observe the emblems of communion in remembrance of the Lord's suffering and death.

This faith is the means by which true believers live out the Christian life. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." (Heb. 10:38). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God ....." (Gal. 2:20)

So it is evident that faith must bring works. Saving faith is that which worketh by love. Of faith without works, James asks, "Can faith [alone] save him?" "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:26) A man's faith is shown by his works, speech, and life. "By their fruits ye shall know them..."

Several things take place when a man comes to God in true faith and repentance. He must choose to turn around and be changed, which is to be converted. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out...." (Acts 3:19) God then, according to His promises, makes changes in that life.

There is a change in our standing with God, in the way He regards us. Formerly we were under wrath, being dead in the sins and uncircumcision of our heart. We were guilty and condemned, but now God sees us as innocent and acceptable. We have peace with God. This is justification. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 2:16) This grace, shown us by God, is made possible by Christ. "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life." (Rom. 5:18)

By that which we have shown to be true faith does man lay hold on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. God then by His grace and favor justifies us through Christ, not by our own merits or works. He cleanseth our conscience from guilt and dead works.

Man, however, can lose this justification and fall from grace, if he does not continue in it, but reverts to disobedience. (II Pet. 1:5-10; II Pet. 3:17) Our salvation is not complete until the "...redemption of the purchased possession." (Eph. 1:14) "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." (Heb. 3:14)

Another thing that occurs is that spiritual life is given us. "He that believeth on the Son bath everlasting life . . . ." (John 3:36). ". . . he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, bath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24) In this way a man is born again by the Spirit of God. "Which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13) "He that bath the Son bath life. . . ." (I John 5:12) Life from God is given us by Christ through the Holy Spirit, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5) The promised Holy Spirit is given unto us. (Gal. 3:14) We are "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in your hearts," (Eph. 3:16b, 17a) We have the Spirit of Christ and belong to Him. (Rom. 8:4) This is regeneration. We receive a new nature, being renewed after the image of our Creator. (Col. 3:10) We can now live in righteousness and holiness after the nature of our heavenly Father, and not after the

flesh. (Rom. 8:1)

As a man is justified and regenerated, he is set aside for God. He comes under the lordship of Christ. He is not his own any more, but belongs to Christ. (I Cor. 6:19-20) He is sanctified and set apart for God. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God." (I Cor. 6:11b) "Therefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. 13:12)

Man must grow and progress in this sanctification. From the time of his justification, he must express sanctification in holiness and good works through the spirit. He must put on the new man. (Eph. 4:24) He must obey the Word of God, being filled with the fruit of righteousness, for herein is God glorified. "Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." (II Cor. 7:1) True sanctification shows itself in a separation from the world in life, speech, and dress. "Who gave himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14) "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. 1:10)

When a man brings his life and will under subjection to God, then the grace of God works in him to do good. That working of grace teaches "us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:12) This is a part of salvation; for where the grace of God does not teach a man this, there is also no salvation.

Another thing that takes place, in a man who has true faith, is that he is born into the family of God. He becomes a fellow citizen with the saints. "For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26) "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God (I John 3:1a) We need to believe that God is true to His promises and accepts us as sons and daughters when we meet the conditions." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs;

heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:16-17b) "To redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal. 4:5-6) It is through the testimony of the Spirit that we have the assurance that we are adopted as sons and daughters. We believe this, not because of our own worthiness, but because God accepts us in Christ. We have evidence that we are passed from death to life because we love the brethren. (I John 3:14) It is in precious kinship with Christ that we believe that we are fellow heirs with Him. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [family]: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. 2:11). Thus we may have a lively hope.

It is in Christ, as we are faithful to Him, that we are secure. However, if a man does not exercise his will properly, but knowingly draws back and fails to meet the conditions of true faith and obedience, he then loses his security, for he loses Christ. (John 15: 6)

### **THE CHURCH, GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH, A BROTHERHOOD**

The New Testament word for church, ("ekklesia," in Greek) is defined as a calling out, or a religious congregation, an assembly of believers committed to the cause of worshipping God. The New Testament uses the terms "church," "kingdom of God," and "kingdom of heaven" frequently and interchangeably. These always refer in some manner to God and His people.

Christ makes no distinction between the kingdom and the church. His words confirm this when he said, "... thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." After Peter's confession, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, Christ immediately confirmed all authority upon this confession. His confession was not made through the revelation of flesh and blood, but of the Father in heaven. The rock mentioned is not Peter,

but rather Peter's confession of Christ as the Son of God. The church is Christ's possession. The keys of the kingdom are given to his church and no subversive powers shall prevail against it. (Matt. 16:16-19)

The following Scriptures confirm through prophecy and fulfillment that the New Testament Church, i.e. kingdom and priesthood, is realized in Christ and His followers. Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, referring to the four great world kingdoms, the last one being the Roman Empire, that of iron and clay, says, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Dan. 2:44) This no doubt is referring to the kingdom of Christ on earth, established during the time of the Roman Empire. In that time, devout Simeon saw Christ as the fulfillment of God's salvation. "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke 2:32) The Roman Empire has long ceased existing, but the kingdom of Christ is eternal.

The angel Gabriel sent from God relates to Mary of her conception. "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:31-33) Christ rejected all the Jews' efforts to make him king of literal Israel. He acknowledged his kingship to Governor Pilate, when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world.... I am a king. To this end was I born. . . ." (John 18:36-37) In Acts 2:29-47 we see the establishing of the throne of David, as being fulfilled in the adding to the church such as should be saved. As the kingship is fulfilled in Christ and his Church, so also is the Old Testament priesthood fulfilled. (Rev. 1:6)

The Scriptures bear record that the Levitical priesthood was not perfect. (Heb. 7) The Levitical priesthood which had an everlasting promise (Exodus 40:15) is fulfilled in Christ who is after the order of Melchisedec. Who was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." "Who is made, not after the law of a carnal com-

mandment, but after the power of an endless life." (Heb. 7:3, 16) This clarifies the eternal realm of his priesthood. "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." He is unchangeable and able to save them to the uttermost. (Heb. 7:24-26)

While Christ is become our perfect high priest, so also his followers are living stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy nation, a royal priesthood. (I Pet. 2:5, 9) The true visible church which is z. kingdom of priests (Rev. 1:6) consisting of united believers is the ultimate fulfillment of God's purpose on earth. (Eph. 1:23) She is a city on a hill that cannot be hid. She is the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Matt. 5:13-14). She is Christ's ambassador, beseeching the world to be reconciled to God. (II Cor. 5:20) The church shall be witness. . ."both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8). Her charge is to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach to observe all things. (Matt. 28:19, 20)

The initial message of this kingdom preached by John the Baptist was, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2) Christ followed with the same words. (Matt. 4:17) And again, Peter preached repentance and three thousand were added to the church. (Acts 2:38, 41)

The manner of entering into his kingdom is clearly expressed by Christ in John 3:5, and Matthew 5:3. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

The church is bought with a price that has no substitute, the precious blood of Christ. (I Pet. 1:18, 19; I Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:7) Therefore it is to be "... a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27) The church is completely Christ centered. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1:18) She functions within the realms of limitless power. (John 14:12) She has the promise of Christ's presence, even unto the end of the world, (Matt. 28:20) holding the keys of the kingdom, (Matt. 16:19) and has a prepared place in heaven. (John 14:3; I Pet. 1:4)

The function and purpose of the church has no equal. It cannot be compared with secular governments, societies, clubs, or any other organization. For "... the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them...." (I Cor. 2:14; also Eph. 1:22, 23, and John 18:36)

The New Testament brotherhood concept allows no lordly positions. In Mark 10:35-45 Jesus' answer to James and John was that he could not grant them lordship as was desired, rather assigned servitude. Christ, himself is our perfect example of a servant. "...the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28) "...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ... and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10:27) On these two commandments, Jesus said, ". . . hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:40) "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." (I John 4:20-21) See also I John 2:9-11 and I John 3:10, 14, 17. The same principle also applies to forgiveness. We receive forgiveness of sins through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. This forgiveness is rendered invalid if we don't forgive others their trespasses. (Matt. 6:14, 15; 18:23-35) Our relationship with God never exceeds that which we have with our brethren. Of the ten commandments, (Exodus 20) four relate to God, and the other six with our fellow man. Although there are no lordly positions in the church, she is responsible to its head--Christ. (Col. 1:18) Its ruling voice is that of God and His Word, rather than the voice of the people. The government of the church is a theocracy rather than a democracy. The ordained ministers of the church are God's delegated authority, responsible to oversee obedience to the Word of God. They do not lord over God's heritage, (a monarchy) but they rule, feed, and care for the flock of God. They therefore are to be honored, obeyed, and respected for their work's sake. (I Pet. 5:2, 3; Heb. 13:17)

Concerning material possessions within the brotherhood, we believe, that we are appointed stewards of them. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. . ." (Psa. 24:1) As a steward over God's goods, a Christian ought to distribute according to

the needs of the brethren. He that practices brotherly love does not neglect his brother in need. Christ taught that the inheritance of the eternal kingdom is for those who shared their goods. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ... the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:34-40) The characteristics of a sharing brother are those of ". . . working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Eph. 4:28) He seeks equality with his brother, as it is written, "He that had gathered much had nothing [left] over; and he that had gathered little had no lack." (II Cor. 8:15) He will not make unreasonable demands for personal gain or require unjust usury. He is willing to give not only a specific portion as was required in the Old Testament (tithes) but shares liberally and cheerfully with his fellow man, knowing that all his possessions belong to God. Faithful stewardship requires that we "owe no man any thing." (Rom. 13:8a) This implies that we are not to ignore unfulfilled obligations, and the church needs to assume responsibility where a brother is proven to be an unfaithful steward, or not capable. This sharing of goods leaves no need for a believer to seek aid through worldly insurance or social programs. Being voluntarily baptized on his own confession, an individual surrenders his own will to the body for the cause of Christ, and loses his identity as an individual. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." (I Cor. 12:13) Christ again is our perfect example. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:4-5) "So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another." (Rom. 12:5) "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." (I Cor. 12:12) "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.... And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." (I Cor. 12:21, 26) The brotherhood concept can only be maintained by practicing sacrificial love. The individual self-life must be rendered inactive. "Verily, Verily, I say unto you,

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." (John 12:24-25)

This concept of the brotherhood also brings a responsibility on the believer to help maintain the unity and purity of the church. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness...." (Gal. 6:1) "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak." (I Cor. 8:9) "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." (Matt. 18:15) When no reconciliation can be made, it becomes a matter for the church, (Matt. 18:16-19; II Tim. 4:2) through its unanimous voice to discipline the disobedient. (Matt. 18:19) However, he is not to be counted as an enemy but admonished as a brother.

Christ, knowing that his departure was at hand, gave his disciples a new commandment. "... that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34-35) Christ washed his disciples' feet, and left us another example of love and humility. "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:15-17)

### **THE HOME - CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

It is understood from the first chapter in the Bible that order originates with God. The object of order is to attain a goal. Every part of creation has its express purpose. The plants, trees, animals, birds, seeds, etc., all have a part in forming the earth. They make liveable the earth, which is man's temporal home. God's purposes are to find their expression in man. All creation is made subject to man, and man is to be subject to God and glorify his purposes. Creation serves man and man is to serve God. Man is the crown of creation. God made man in his own image; male and female created He them. (Gen. 1:26, 27) In this Scripture God states what man is and what he is to do.

His charge is to be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, and to subdue and have dominion over creation.

God saw that it was not good for Adam to be without a help meet for him. (Gen. 2:18) "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof ...Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:21, 23-24) Here we have the institution of the home.

The home is established by God to promote his will on earth in an orderly and godly manner. God desires fruitfulness and order. A home is established when a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself with his wife, and they become one flesh. (Matt. 19:4-5) Since the home is a spiritual institution, the leaving of father and mother to unite as husband and wife should be sanctioned and blest through the administration of the church. When seeking a companion is done in the fear of the Lord and in the order of the church, it is proper for a man to cleave to his wife and they become one flesh through sharing one with another in spirit, soul, and body. Once male and female share physical relations, God considers them one flesh. (I Cor. 6:16)

In the case of fornication between two unmarried persons, they should seek to become legally married if at all feasible. "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." (I Cor. 7:2) God's order for the home is one husband-wife relationship. The Lord commands, ". . . Let not the wife depart from her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." (I Cor. 7:10, 11) Here we have the permanency of marriage as long as the other party is living. (Rom. 7:2-3)

From the beginning God did not plan divorce and much less remarriage. (Matt. 19:8) Where husband or wife is defiled through extra-marital relations, the marriage becomes defiled. If separation takes place for the sake of purity, such persons shall not remarry. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matt. 19:9)

Paul in I Corinthians 7:39 said, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." Jesus also said, ". . . That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery. . . ." (Matt. 5:32) By this it is clear that divorce and remarriage is condemned by God and has no promise of eternal life. The sanctity of marriage was lightly esteemed in the days of Noah and God brought judgment upon the earth.

We have observed the sacredness of marriage and that God wants it to be faithful and permanent. In order for a marriage to be blessed, husband and wife and children must be in God's order. Paul, in I Corinthians 11, teaches us this order. Verse 3 says, "the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." The husband has the major responsibility of directing the home for the glory of Christ. He needs to have the proper relationship with Christ in submission and self-denial to glorify his Head. He is the God-delegated authority over the woman and is responsible for her actions in the home and in society. (Gen. 3:16; I Pet. 3:7) The woman is the weaker vessel and needs the masculine influence to maintain a stable position before God and man. The woman, because of the transgression is to be subject to man and her desire is to be toward him. (Gen. 3:16) "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence... Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." (I Tim. 2:12, 15) "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." (Eph. 5:24) Men ought to love their wives as their own bodies and to nourish and cherish them. (Eph. 5:28, 29)

The Scriptures teach us that there are outward symbols to show God's order of headship. The man is not to cover his head with a covering of spiritual significance. The woman is to have her hair uncut and covered as a sign of submission to her head (man and ultimately Christ) and for the sake of praying and prophesying because of the angels. (I Cor. 11:3-15)

The home that is blest with children has great responsibility. Children are one of God's ways to propagate his will on earth.

Children are an heritage of the Lord. (Psa. 127:3) The will of God is that there be homes with faithful children, not accused of rioting, obedient to their parents, respectful to the elders and trained in the fear of God. (Titus 1:6; Eph. 1:6) Children need care and attention. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." (Prov. 29:15) "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." (Prov. 22:15) "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." (Prov. 22:18) "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." (Prov. 13:24) "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4) By this we see that child-training takes time, self-denial and consistency.

The father has the primary responsibility to nurture and admonish the children. The mother is his constant support and shares this responsibility. Children need to be taught from the Bible and trained (nurtured) to obey and do the teachings. The promise is: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6) Children should not be constantly criticised and ridiculed. Once old enough, they need to be explained the purpose of discipline, lest they become indifferent and rebellious. Neither are they able to properly develop in a permissive environment. A child will need to have his will broken, whereby he will learn to submit voluntarily to authority. God would have parents be alert, loving, consistent, and exercising discipline towards their children.

The home is a place where togetherness is necessary. A life style where families are seldom together and each goes his own way will not bring desirable results.

The mobility and communication that is made available through modern technology encourages the breakdown of family intimacy. Modern conveniences should not be utilized at the expense of a cohesive family structure. It is therefore needful to restrict access to that which is harmful. Every family needs a time each day when they sit together to read and discuss the Word of God and to pray together. Children need to hear their father and mother pray. Parents need to hear their children pray. Children find security when they trust in God and make

their requests known to him.

A father's first responsibility before God on earth is his children and his kin. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (I Tim. 5:8)

God has made a covenant with his people and that covenant finds its continuity on earth in homes where there are faithful children, who in turn will have faithful children.

### **WORSHIP**

Man is inclined to worship because he is created in such a manner by the will of God. Even when a man has no true knowledge of God, we find he is prone to give awe, reverence, and honor to a power other than himself. (Acts 17:16) Romans 2:14 tells us that man does these things by nature.

God has created us to praise him, to worship and love him. (Eph. 1:4, 6, 12) It is commanded that we worship him. (Matt. 4:10; 22:37). Yet we are not compelled to do so. It is our choice whom we serve. (Josh. 24:15)

Our entire life reveals whom we worship. This means that we not only worship God with our lips or words, but our thoughts, our conduct, and our motives must all be to the glory of God to fully please Him. If we love or worship ourselves, or serve the god of this world, we shall also reap the result of our choice. (Gal. 6:7, 8) We cannot ignore the commandments of the Lord and still claim to be a true worshipper. (Matt. 7:21; John 14:15) We find it is impossible to separate true worship, holy living, and sanctified service. The extent of our devotion to God is shown by our walk of life. Thus we can say that God is worshipped, magnified, and glorified by holy living. (Luke 1:75; I Thess. 4:7)

It is God's desire and will that we present our bodies to him as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1) and walk holy and without blame before him in love. This is our responsibility. We can not fulfill and maintain the completeness of adoration and worship alone, although individual reading of the Scriptures and the importance of personal prayer must never be neglected. (II Tim. 2:15; Rom. 1:9)

Families need to set aside a portion of time when their hearts are tuned to worship. Fathers, mother, and children should daily spend time together in reading, prayer and praise. This is needful and conducive to holy living.

It is also the desire of the Lord that saints come together and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to him by Jesus Christ. (I Pet. 2:5; I Tim. 2:8) The assembling of ourselves together is not to be forsaken. It is the more needful ". . . As ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:25) It is God's desire that the assembling be in unity of the Spirit and oneness, that all may be edified, and that hearts be lifted up in praise to Him. (Eph. 4:3)

God has in His wisdom ordained a special day set apart for worshipping Him. In Genesis 2:1-3, we find that after God had finished the work of His creation, He rested, blessed, and sanctified the seventh day.

He later reminded his people to keep it holy and not labor on that special day. It was a part of His divine order for the benefit of man. "For the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." (Mark 2:27) A day of rest is necessary for the strengthening of both the spirit and the body.

Christians observe the first day of the week, the day of our Lord's resurrection, as a day of reverence, worship and rest. (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2) Christian fellowship, meditation, listening to, and reading the Word of God is essential for spiritual growth and for the strengthening of the bonds of brotherhood. How fitting it is to be gathered together and worship the Lord with one another prior to the week of work and service! In the congregation of the saints the Lord is praised, and exhortation is given to edify. (Psa. 122:1; 149:1)

We notice that it is not intended to be a day of mere idleness, laziness, feasting, or pleasure, but a holy day set apart for a special purpose of devotion, dedication, prayer, and rest. It is to be kept in a godly manner and manual activities must be avoided as much as possible.

### **PRAYER AND FASTING**

Prayer is the access which we have to come boldly unto the throne of grace to plead for forgiveness and cleansing and to seek victory and power. It is speaking to God. It is asking for

that which man does not have and God can supply. (Heb. 4:16; Luke 18:13; I John 2:1; Heb. 10:19) Since God created man with a will to choose, man must respond to God's available grace and power through asking in prayer.

The Father is glorified as we pray in the name of the Son. (John 14:13) "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. 21:22; I John 5:14, 15) It pleases the Father to answer our prayers according to His will. Our prayers are an abomination to God if we pray with selfish desires, or live in disobedience to His Word, or regard iniquity in our hearts. (James 4:3; Prov. 28:9; Psa. 66:18) We are in turn commanded to give thanks in everything. (Col. 4:2; I Thess. 5:18)

Praying is to be done before the partaking of food. (Matt. 14:19; 15:36; Acts 27:35) These provisions are to be received with thanksgiving, for they are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. (I Tim. 4:3) A prayer of thanks after a meal is also proper. (Deut. 8:10)

Jesus commanded us to pray after the manner found in Matt. 6:9-13. This prayer should be used frequently, and the pattern found therein is to be followed. (Luke 11:1-4; Acts 4:24-30) This prayer begins with praise and the acknowledging of the holiness of God, following in petitioning for needs in our lives and those of others, concluding in the expression of submission and honor.

It is our duty to pray for kings and those in authority, and for those who despitefully use or persecute us. (I Tim. 2:2; Matt. 5:44) We are also commanded to pray for each other. (James 5:16; I Thess. 5:17) Praying is to be done continually and frequently. (Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2; I Tim. 2:8) It is the key to the day, and the lock for the night.

Fasting often accompanies earnest prayer. (Acts 14:23; 13:2, 3) Times of fasting and praying in love and oneness gives the church, and the individual power, strength, and discernment. (Mark 9:29)

The sacrificing of the personal will in submission to God through fasting gives one greater ability to meditate and to wholly pursue the will of God. Prayer and fasting are vital for our spiritual life. (Isa. 58:3-6)

## **FELLOWSHIP**

When divine grace enlightens our lives and we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. (I John 1:7)

Christian fellowship exceeds, but also includes visiting or keeping each other company. It draws and knits together in love and provokes unto good works. (Col. 2:2) It joins together the believers in one body, in one mind and in the same judgment. (I Cor. 1:10) True fellowship is not passive, it is active, even in each other's absence. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10)

Christian fellowship is manifested and maintained in the function of the church, where there is unity, faults are confessed, burdens are borne and the weak are comforted and supported. "Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of a friend." (Prov. 27:17) Care should be taken that nothing be done to cause our brother to stumble or be offended; for we who are converted should strengthen our brethren. (Luke 22:32)

Since spiritual gifts are given for different administrations and operations for the completeness of the body of Christ, we recognize the need of the fellowship of the saints. (Eph. 2:19; I Cor. 12:5, 6) To disregard or despise the need of our brother's counsel, advice, and encouragement is to fail to recognize one of God's vital means through which He speaks and enlightens us. Moreover we are not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather are to reprove them; nor are we to be deceived, for evil communications corrupt good manners. (Eph. 5:11; I Cor. 15:33)

## **SINGING**

Singing is a divine gift of praise and worship. While it is a pleasant, wholesome, and upbuilding activity to be engaged in, it is not intended for mere pleasure, entertainment, or for the gratifying of the senses. It is to be directed to the Lord, and its message is for the edifying of the saints. "Speaking to your selves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19)

Colossians 3:16 encourages that singing be used as a means of edifying or admonishing each other. Songs then must be of such content that they harmonize with the Scriptures, express sound doctrine, cause the feeble to be comforted, call the erring unto repentance, and encourage the faithful to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:14)

The vehicle or form of music must be one of simplicity so as not to be more noticeable than the words, distracting one from the intended message, or be of such complexity that those with lesser talents cannot participate in unison with the congregation. (I Cor. 14:15) Special singing for entertainment is not Biblical worship.

In the Old Testament dispensation the sounds of instruments and strings were often employed to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. At that time worship emphasized outward ritual. That is no longer what God desires. God desires the expression of our spirit with joy and praise, "God ... is Lord of heaven and earth ... Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing. . ." (Acts 17:24-25) For when we sing, we are to sing with the spirit and with the understanding also. (I Cor. 14:15) Jesus said, ". . . the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." (John 4:23) There is neither spirit nor truth in any musical instrument; therefore the Christian has no use for them. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." (Heb. 13:15)

### **CROSS-BEARING**

When man becomes converted, through repentance and faith in Christ, he becomes partaker "of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (II Pet. 1:4) But he carries this treasure in an earthen vessel. (II Cor. 4:7) "That which is born of the flesh is flesh..." (John 3:6) Here the struggle begins. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. . . ." (Gal. 5:17)

God's salvation for man lies not merely in being initially converted.

"He that endureth to the end shall be saved." (Matt. 10:22b) Only these obtain the crown of life. (James 1:12) There will be no crown, nor pleasing of God if we do not bear our cross and follow him. (Luke 14:27, 33; 9:23; Matt. 10:38; John 12:24, 25; Rom. 6:11) The old man with its lusts must be mortified. We are to arm ourselves with the same flesh-denying mind that Christ had. (I Pet. 4:1) Where there is conversion, there is another lordship. The Apostle Paul says, ". . . we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh." (Rom. 8:12) We are to follow the footsteps of our humble, suffering saviour. (I Pet. 2:21) Cross-bearing is the effect of our voluntary obedience to the commandments of God and to deny oneself, which often results in suffering. (I Pet. 2:20, 21; 4:1) Cross-bearing does not please oneself, but also has in view our brother's convictions. (Rom. 14 and 15) It includes abstaining from things lawful but not expedient, following after the ". . . things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." (Rom. 14:19)

Denial of self, involves the repudiation of pride. The jostling for position or power, the struggle for reputation and fame, and dishonesty in face of failure must be crucified. (Matt. 20:25-27) Covetousness is the root of all kinds of evil, it is the love of money and the desire for that which is not ours. It is not to ". . . be named once among you, as becometh saints." (Eph. 5:3)

We are the temple of the living God, and are responsible to keep it holy. (I Cor. 3:16) Gluttony, the usage of tobacco, intoxicants, loose sexual attitudes and practices, luxurious buying and living are sin and are to be forsaken.

All self-denial is to be motivated and empowered by God who dwells within us, ". . . both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) We do not merit salvation by our self-denial or good works. Rather, they are the fruit of unfeigned faith in the unmerited grace of God. This grace teaches us to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and to live ". . . soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:11-12)

"This is love, that we walk after his commandments...." (II John 6) The obedience of the Christian is the outward work or fruit of the inward faith. Obedience, works, and faith cannot be separated. Faith is of the heart, and is expressed in conduct

through outward obedience. (Jas. 2:18) It is not in merely saying, "Lord, Lord" but in doing the will of the Father that makes us "blessed of the Father." (Matt. 7:21, 24; Gal. 5:6; I Pet. 1:14)

We are responsible to obey all the commandments of God. (Matt. 28:20) We are to be "obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts. . ." (I Pet. 1:14) Sheep hear and follow their shepherd, and so do the people of God hear the True Shepherd. (John 10:3)

The wrath of God is upon them that obey not the Gospel of Christ. (II Thess. 2:8) Moreover, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life. . ." (Rev. 22:14)

The teaching of a separated people of God is a prominent doctrine throughout the entire Bible. The phrases, "chosen generation," "royal priesthood," "holy nation," "peculiar people," "Bride of Christ," all denote a group separated from common society. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are pilgrims and strangers to the common order of worldly men and have no abiding city here.

The world is at enmity with God, ruled by the prince of darkness, who works in the children of disobedience. Jesus said, ". . . because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19) We are to be nonconformed to the world, and separated unto God. Romans 12:1, 2 teach us to be first inwardly transformed, and then outwardly nonconformed in dress, speech, lifestyle, and outlook. The line of separation is distinctly obvious between the people of God and the world. The one lives and acts according to his own flesh and worldly fads and desires. The other as an obedient, sanctified child of God seeks to fulfill the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

In this life of separation, love is the greatest principle. Godly love is essentially a sacrifice. In regeneration love issues into a way of life, one of humility, submission, and peace. The Gospel is one of peace and is the fulfillment of the kingdom mentioned in Isaiah 11:5-10. The people of God are to pursue peace and holiness. (Heb. 12:14) We are not to retaliate, but are called to bless our enemies, and suffer wrong in silence. (Matt. 5:44; I Pet. 2:19-20)

This love does not tolerate the use of force, military or non-military, nor biased, harsh judgment.

". . . Love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. 13:10) It is the substance that bonds Christians into a brotherhood, and is the standard by which the called-out church relates to all mankind. This is what makes the church the ". . . salt of the earth," and the ". . . light of the world," and a city that is set on a hill." (Matt. 5:13-14)

### **SIMPLICITY OF LIFE STYLE**

Our calling as the church is to have but one husband (Christ), and to be a chaste virgin to Christ. (II Cor. 11:2). We are to pursue a life style that bears the testimony that we are unspotted from the world. Satan's devices are designed to corrupt our minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. (II Cor. 11:3) Our conversation in this world is to be in simplicity and Godly sincerity. (II Cor. 1:12)

We are clothed with a body that is prone to cater to the worldly, visible, and temporal. Our surroundings can easily distract us from serving Christ in singleness of heart. As strangers and pilgrims, we are to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. (G Peter 2:11) Paul says, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient..." (I Cor. 6:12) Some things that the world has to offer may not be wrong in themselves but have potential to entangle us in affairs that are ultimately destructive to the soul. Therefore decisions should be made having in view not only the present, but also the future consequences. How can a people of God best abstain from all appearances of evil? Since there is variation of individual conscience regarding the permissible or non-permissible, for the individual's safety, it is necessary that a body of believers adopt a Biblical standard of practice and uphold that standard through uniformity.

Each generation has its peculiar evils to contend with, on which the Scriptures may not give explicit instructions. Discernment needs to be made regarding what is edifying and what is potentially harmful. Application of Bible principle must be made if a body of believers is to maintain its separation and purity.

We read how Peter in the early church preached the way of

salvation and "with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." (Acts 2:40) We can believe, "those many other words" were specific warnings of dangers pertaining to that day. Jesus said to Peter concerning the church, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose in earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:19)

God has delegated authority to the Biblical church to establish a standard of holiness to maintain its purity in this wicked world. There is power and a pronounced blessing upon a people who are united in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt. 18:20) God will honor the agreement of a spiritual brotherhood where each is responsible to God and to one another.

To be able to properly discern the will of God, the children of God must be nonconformed to the world. (Rom. 12:1, 2) Non-conformity is all inclusive. The matter of modesty in personal appearance is taught in the Scriptures. They give instructions concerning dressing of the hair, jewelry, and clothing. (I Pet. 3:3; I Tim. 2:9) Outward adornment is forbidden. Jewelry has no purpose but to adorn and make vain and therefore is to be shunned by the follower of the humble Christ. Modest clothing covers and conceals the body in shamefacedness and sobriety. A consistent form of modest clothing where worldly styles are not followed is maintained only where brethren are united upon the same practice.

The world does not make a proper distinction between the masculine and the feminine. The Scriptures do. The appearance, position, and role of man and woman are different. God in the beginning made this distinction. Out of Adam he made the woman. He separated the feminine from the masculine, and they were man and woman. (Gen. 2:21, 22; I Cor. 14:34, 35) Where this distinction is not respected, a society will not be balanced or function properly. Man is to act, dress, and have a different role in life from that of the woman. The beard is a masculine characteristic that shows this distinction as well as an expression of the image of God as in creation. (Gen. 1:27) For a man to dress like the woman, and the woman to dress like the man is an abomination unto the Lord. (Dent. 22:5)

The Christians associations are not those of the world. He does not voluntarily expose himself to evil. Worldly organizations and secret societies and the influence of formal, higher education militate against his heavenly citizenship. He will not identify himself with this system; rather he identifies with the church exclusively. (II Cor. 6:14-18)

Movies, television, radio, and worldly literature are channels through which much evil is introduced. Their influence is subtle and expresses many kinds of evil. By these forms of communication much precious time is squandered and the mind is distracted from meditating on things virtuous. Abstinence is vital for the welfare of the soul and spirit.

Since the Christian life affects all of a person, he occupies himself with worth-while activities, labouring with his hands, doing that which is good. (Eph. 4:28) He will not make a living through a dishonest occupation or one that does not fulfil the basic needs of man. Such trades and businesses that cater to the lusts and pleasures of men, he will have no part in. He finds his contentment in God, not in riches which drown men in destruction and perdition. (I Tim. 6:9) His conversation is without covetousness and he is content with such things as he has, for God has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5)

### **THE NON-USE OF FORCE**

Christ sent forth his disciples, saying, "Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves...." (Matt. 10:16) This implies we are not to retaliate nor use force for our defense or accomplishments. Jesus exemplified this principle when he was not accepted in Samaria. The disciples wanted to call fire from heaven to consume the people. Jesus ". . . rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:54-56)

The teachings of Christ are plain. "That ye resist not evil. If any man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.... Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."(Matt.5:39, 40, 44) He also taught that the sword be put into his place: for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26:52)

This conduct of the children of God is the fulfillment of the prophecy foreseen in Isaiah 2:4, where ". . . they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.... neither shall they learn war any more."

The teachings of the apostles are in complete harmony with those of Christ. "Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not." (Rom. 12:14) "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing. . ." G Pet. 3:9) "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (I Cor. 6:7) ". . . Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:19-21) According to this, we are never to inflict pain, or cause harm or sorrow, or sue any man when defrauded. Rather, we are to promote life, and seek the well-being and salvation of all men. (I Tim. 2:4)

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12)

### **THE RELATION OF CHURCH AND STATE**

The office of magistracy is instituted by God, who ordains a ruling power over every country or nation, and yet is outside of the perfection of Christ. (Rom. 13:1) The secular government has the right to impose taxes, rules, and laws that are necessary for the protection and survival of man. (Rom. 13:3-6)

The Christian's responsibility is to "Submit ... to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." G Pet. 2:13-14) We are not to speak evil of dignities, or despise dominion, but are to give honor to whom honor is due. (Jude 8; Rom. 13:7) It is the Christian's obligation to pay governmental dues and taxes. (Matt. 22:21) We are exhorted to pray, "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." [1 Tim. 2:2-3)

A Christian cannot become a part of, or identify himself with the offices or functions of earthly governments. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. . . ." (John 18:36) We are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, (Heb. 11:13; I Pet. 2:11) for our citizenship is ". . . with the saints, and of the household of God." (Eph. 2:19) This implies separation of church and state.

In Mark 10:42, 43, we read that Jesus said "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you." This teaches that no magisterial office is to be held by a Christian. Nor should a Christian help to elect or participate in the official functions of the government, neither by lobbying nor protesting. Rather, his duty is to support them in constant prayer.

If a Christian is brought before the earthly government for righteousness sake, he is permitted to speak, that which is given him by the Holy Spirit. (Mark 13:11) In all things the Word of God is to be obeyed above any other authority. "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Act. 5:29b)

### **THE NON-SWEARING OF OATHS**

The swearing of oaths was permitted in the Old Testament dispensation. It is mentioned in Genesis 24:3, 8, 9; 26:28; Leviticus 5:4, and many other instances. The Christian is not permitted to swear, for Christ abolished all swearing of oaths in the words, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all...." (Matt. 5:34) "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt. 5:37) The words of James give us the same teaching, ". . . above all things, my brethren, swear not. . ." (James 5:12) See also II Corinthians 1:17-20. The believer rather than swearing may affirm to the truth. (Acts 12:15)

The believer is admonished to fulfill his words, to speak the truth in love, and to live up to what he says or promises. (Eph. 4:15; Col. 3:9) For ". . . whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" has no promise of heaven. (Rev. 22:15)

The life and the everyday walk of the Christian, itself, is his true testimony to his fellowman. He needs not to swear in any way, but is to ". . . lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (I Tim. 2:2)

Because Christians always have a high regard for truth, they do not accept the worldly system which has a time of being "especially truthful" (under oath). For the greatest oath is too weak to make an untruth true! Yet the simplest truth is so powerful it does not need strong words to make it stand.

### **BAPTISM**

Jesus before leaving this earthly scene, commanded his disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16a)

By these Scriptures it is evident that water baptism, as an ordinance, was instituted by Jesus Christ. The command is two-fold: to teach, and to baptize. Teaching precedes baptism.

This order was explicitly followed by the Apostles. Examples of this we find in the book of Acts. Philip by the prompting of the Spirit, and the invitation of the Ethiopian eunuch, began where the man had been reading in the Prophet Isaiah, and preached unto him Jesus. When he desired baptism, "Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. When the Ethiopian eunuch confessed his faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Philip baptized him upon confession of his faith. (Acts 8:37, 38)

Further, when Peter preached Jesus Christ and the Word of life in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-43), the Holy Spirit fell on them which heard the Word. Peter said "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized... and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:47, 48)

And again, Paul and Silas preached the words of the Lord to the Philippian Jailer, and all that were in the house rejoiced, believing in God. "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized...." (Acts 16:32-34)

From these and other examples, it is evident that the apostles first taught and instructed the converts, and upon confession of their faith in Jesus Christ they baptized them.

Peter declares baptism to be, "the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 3:21b) It is the witness of inner cleansing, or washing of regeneration.

Paul asserts by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. . . (I Cor. 12:13) This indicates a spiritual baptism of which water baptism is the outward seal or witness. It is a witness to the new birth, and to the change that has taken place in our heart and life. In a case where a person was scripturally taught and was baptized, but lacked regeneration, full and complete repentance is required for his baptism to be complete. In other words, that which is lacking must be fulfilled.

Regarding the above mentioned change of heart and life, the believer becomes aware of the need of repentance, a turning around, a casting off of the old man, and a putting on of the new according to Ephesians 4:22, 24. The Word of God, when accepted into one's life, changes his will and inspires a deep inner Godly fear, and a desire for the soul to submit in full obedience to God.

This cleansing, in turn, induces a real conflict against sin. It is a suffering in the flesh, as the Apostle Peter termed it: "forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." (I Peter 4:1) The suffering in the flesh and the ceasing from sin implies a continuous conflict for the Christian.

Baptism also signifies a burying with Christ, as the words of Paul remind us: "Know ye not, that so many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. 6:3- 6)

By these words the believer understands that baptism signifies dying unto the flesh, or the putting to death the Adamic nature. Burial of sin and resurrection into a new life becomes a settled fact in the believer's mind. The fruit of the new life with Christ does not come forth unless the old is first buried with him. There is victory over sin.

We are confirmed by baptism into fellowship with Christ and the Church, being called by grace. Therefore we will, for his sake, die unto sin, and live in righteousness as true members of His Body. The believer's affections are set on the things above, not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:2) "For our conversation is in heaven. . . ." (Phil. 3:20) The hope of the Christian is anchored in eternity making him a stranger and pilgrim on earth.

Baptism is also seen as an act of obedience. Christ demonstrated this when he came to John the Baptist, at the River Jordan, to be baptized. John forbade him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee." Jesus answered him, saying, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3:13-15)

Baptism, (by pouring, a type of which we see when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon God's people, Acts 2:17, 18) is the initiatory rite by which the believer becomes a member of the Church, the visible body of Christ on earth. As a member of the Church, the believer is privileged to receive, as well as to contribute to the fellowship of love. Paul spoke of the function in oneness and the unity of the Church to the Ephesians: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:14-16)

In baptism, we renounce the world, the devil, and our own flesh, with the express desire to live alone for Jesus Christ. We make a covenant with God and the Church. To help maintain this order, we respect its authority, and commit ourselves to it's

discipline and general upbuilding in common union with fellow believers.

### **COMMUNION**

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." (I Cor. 11:2)

Observing communion, or the Lord's supper, is an ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus on the night before His death, as a remembrance of His suffering and death, and as a promotion and strengthening of Christian love and unity. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (I Cor. 11:23-25)

The Bible teaches the Lord's supper or communion to be a fulfilment of the Jewish Passover, which required a perfect lamb, as a type of the Saviour Jesus Christ, and as a remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt. Inasmuch as the Jewish Passover had an order in observing it, so also the communion table, or the Lord's supper, has its order.

The communion table shall consist of bread and the cup (fruit of the vine); the bread represents the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup represents the communion of the blood of Christ. (Mark 14:22-25) "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (I Cor. 10:16)

This, the Bible teaches is symbolical. It refreshes and reminds us of our communion with the Lord Jesus Christ and with one another. The Scriptures teach the bread and the cup to be figurative, with the partaker receiving them spiritually as the Bible states in John 6:63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The communicant or believer, in partaking of these emblems, is showing he has been accepted by Christ and united with him. Christ is his head, and he, as a believer, is a member of the body, as stated in Ephesians 5:23. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

These emblems, the bread and the cup, are to be observed only among members of like faith. "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." (I Cor. 10:17)

The duty of the church is to examine each communicant prior to this observance, and purge out all leaven (sin). "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened...." ". . . and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." (I Cor. 5:7; 10:20)

After each communicant has been examined by the church and has submitted to the authority of the church, let him then examine himself, and then eat of the bread and drink of the cup, lest he eat and drink damnation to himself in not discerning the Lord's body, as taught in I Corinthians 11:28.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5)

Before partaking of these emblems there are two basic commandments to observe: to be examined by the church, and to examine oneself. When one acknowledges Christ as his Saviour and submits to the authority of God's Word, he loses his identity as an individual and finds purpose and mutual identity in uniting with the body of Christ. (John 12:24-25) As the grains of wheat are broken and ground into flour and shaped into one loaf, and as the grapes are broken and pressed into one cup, so must the communicant's will and desire be broken and united to that one body, the church.

The Bible teaches that when communicants partake of the bread and fruit of the vine, the suffering and death of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (I Cor. 11:26) The word shew has the original meaning "to declare or to proclaim."

## **THE WASHING OF THE SAINTS' FEET**

The ordinance of feet washing is a commandment and Godly virtue. Believers are taught humility and the necessity of observing this commandment by Christ's own example to his disciples in John 13:1-17. "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13:13-14)

This literal observance reminds us of our initial cleansing through the shed blood of Christ. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (II Cor. 7:1)

We are further reminded as we wash one another's feet that we are one another's servant, needing each other's admonition and exhortation to uphold and maintain a consistent disciplined life.

The washing of feet (brother with brother, sister with sister) signifies brotherly affection. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." (Rom. 12:10) In this united spirit no preference to greatness is assumed, all are of equal value to the congregation as we are before the Lord.

To be qualified to observe this commandment, we believe as the Scripture saith, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (I Pet. 1:22-23)

Being a part of the "holy priesthood" (I Pet. 2:5) we acknowledge and confess that feet washing is included in our Lord's commission: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt. 28:20)

"For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous." (I John 5:3) "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:17)

## **THE HOLY KISS**

The holy kiss is a Christian greeting commanded in the Scriptures. It is a token of love and fellowship with one another and with the Lord. It is to be practiced regularly by all Christians as they meet and fellowship together, as a brotherhood.

The Scriptural teaching that we are to greet or salute one another with a kiss, is understood as a command. It is mentioned in the following Scriptures. "Salute one another with an holy kiss..." (Rom. 16:16) "All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss." (I Cor. 16:20) "Greet one another with an holy kiss." (II Cor. 13:12) "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss." (I Thess. 5:26) "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity...." (I Pet. 5:14)

Brethren are to greet brethren, and sisters to greet sisters. It is to be performed in purity and respect, for it is a holy kiss of love. "Greet them that love us in the faith... ." (Titus 3:15)

As the bread and the cup are empty symbols in communion if the communicant does not partake in the spirit of communion, so also the holy kiss is a mere form of greeting if the participant does not walk in true holiness and righteousness, loving one another with a pure heart fervently. (I Pet. 1:22)

It must always be borne in mind that the holy kiss was not, nor is, a mere cultural or customary greeting, nor can it be replaced by such in our day.

## **PREACHING AND THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS**

The church is given the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel and to warn the wicked and the erring of the wrath to come. (Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47) The duty of every believer is to be an ambassador for Christ (II Cor. 5:20) and to be able with meekness to give an answer for the reason of the hope that is within him. (I Pet. 3:15) Yet we also find that there is a Scriptural order of responsible leadership within the body of the church. The flock of God must be fed and nourished. (Eph. 4:11, 12; I Pet. 5:2) There is nothing that can take the place of preaching and teaching. It is God's means to bring His word to the ears of His people. (Titus 1:3) The ministry is charged to perform the various

functions and ceremonies such as baptism, breaking of bread, marriage, anointing, and laying on of hands.

The church can not function without laws and ordinances which the Word of God sets forth. (Matt. 28:20) Where there are rules, they must be obeyed or they are of none effect. The maintaining of the church in the Scriptural order is chiefly the ministry's responsibility. (I Tim. 5:17, 20; II Tim. 4:2) They rule, not as lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock, leading out in decisions and giving direction. (I Pet. 5:2, 3) It is the responsibility of church members to submit to authority as ordained of God and to pray for their ministers, so that their labor may be of joy and not of grief. (Heb. 13:17, II Cor. 1:11)

If the church is in need of ministers, we are commanded to pray the Lord of the harvest (Matt. 9:37:38) that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. It is the duty of the church to pray for laborers, and the Lord, the head of the church, holds the exclusive right to call them unto His work. The church is God's instrument through which the Christian ministry receives its charge. (Matt. 16:19; Acts 14:23)

In the seeking of a minister the church should initially give themselves unto prayer and fasting, seeking the guidance of God and the revealing of His will through the Holy Spirit. The church, being unanimous in seeking a minister, shall in a spirit of discernment choose a pious brother, one that is blameless, sound in the faith, sober, filled with the Holy Spirit and having the qualifications outlined in the Scriptures. See I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. After the voice of the brotherhood is received, the lot shall be used to reveal whom the Lord is calling, unless only one has been chosen. (Acts 1:26; 6:1-6)

The work of the ministry is not an occupation to make a livelihood and is a life-long calling. (Acts 20:34) The Bible strongly condemns men who serve in the Gospel for filthy lucre and disqualifies such for the ministry. (Pet. 5:2)

The responsibility is to be shared by various brethren. The Word of God mentions various callings and regards the office of a bishop as the most responsible calling in the church. G Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:7) A minister may have the work of an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher, (Eph. 4:11) while a deacon is more to look after the material needs of the church. (Acts

6:1-6)

Each is to serve with the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ. (I Pet. 4:11)

If a minister departs from the faith or way of truth, the church which ordained him shall discipline him according as his deeds deserve. (I Tim. 5:19, 20; 1:20) For the Gospel of Christ must not become perverted or be preached unsoundly. (Gal. 1:7-9)

### **ANOINTING WITH OIL**

Anointing with oil, as it is given in James 5:14-15, is not an explicit commandment as is baptism and communion. Rather, it is a divine commandment given in Holy Writ, to be entered into by the choice of the believer. As God has special provisions for special needs in the believer's life such as marriage, so also is the case of anointing with oil. (I Cor. 7:7-9)

Anointing is not for the salvation of the soul, but for the healing of the body. It should not be administered as a preparation for dying, but that the sick person's health may be restored. We have an apostolic example where they ". . . anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." (Mark 6:13)

Like all other ordinances and commandments of the Bible, it is important that the instructions as given in Scripture are closely followed, without adding or taking away. (Rev. 22:18, 19) James approaches the subject in this manner, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church...." As it is the natural response for a believer to sing psalms when merry, or to pray when obstacles confront him, so also James reminds him to be anointed when he is sick.

At the time of anointing with oil, the congregation is not to be called together as for a ceremony. Neither as Cornelius who called together "his kinsmen and near friends," (Acts 10:24) but specifically the elders of the church are to be called.

Because it is the "prayer of faith that saves the sick," there should be no adult present merely as a spectator, but everyone should have faith to participate in the prayer of faith. This prayer, according to James 5:14, should be offered over the sick person.

The oil used for anointing is not used for its healing properties, but as a symbol of grace. As water is used in baptism as a symbol of cleansing, so is the oil in anointing used as a symbol of healing. Yet the power to heal is of the Lord, received through the prayer of faith in obedience to the Word of God. In Luke 8:43-48 the woman was healed when she touched the hem of the Lord's garment, after having spent all her living upon physicians who could not heal her. The power to heal was of course not in the garment which she touched, but by her faith in the Lord Jesus.

Sickness is not necessarily the result of the sins of the sick person; however in some cases it may be. Should the sick be convicted of some unconfessed sin in his life, it should be confessed before the anointing. If the sick should feel that his sickness is a chastisement from the Lord for sins committed in his life, and has repented, confessed, and forsaken his sins, he may be assured that God has forgiven him. His sins will not hinder his being healed.

Why are not all that are anointed healed? In this, as in all other things, we must keep in mind that God is sovereign and knows what is best in all things. The Lord Jesus in Gethsemane prayed, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; ... nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." So also we should be very positive as to the Lord's ability to heal the sick, but we should be fully resigned to His will. Healing is administered according to the will of God, and not by the will of man. Paul left one of his fellow workers behind sick. (I Tim. 5:23) It is evident that some afflictions like Paul's thorn in the flesh are to be borne (I Cor. 12:7), some respond to natural remedies, and some are to be subjects for appeal unto the Lord through the anointing of oil.

### **THE WOMAN'S VEILING**

The basic teaching concerning the woman's veiling or covering is found in I Corinthians 11:2-16.

The Scriptures teach headship. ". . . The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (Verse 3) The divine order is God, Christ, then man, then the woman. The veiling on the woman's head is a visible sign of submission and obedience to this order.

We are taught the reason for God's order of headship relating to man and woman. "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man." (I Cor. 11:7-8) "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (I Tim. 2:13, 14) By this we understand why God put the woman in subjection under man. The veiling is a sign of submission to this order because of the order in creation and because the woman was deceived. Because the woman was of man and created for man, she ought to have power on her head because of the angels. (I Cor. 11:10) Obedience to God's Word brings power, freedom, strength, and protection. Disobedience has no such promises.

The glory of the woman is her long hair. (Verse 15) She is commanded to cover her glory. As the woman's hair is her glory, so also is the woman the glory of man. A woman dishonoureth man (her head) when she openly displays her long hair. Her hair is to be uncut and veiled. "For every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." (I Cor. 11:5)

The Scriptures speak of two different coverings. Long hair is a natural covering. The covering referred to in verses 5 and 6 is a specific covering to cover her head or hair. The woman is to have both coverings on her head. To cut her hair is a shame and not to cover it is also a shame. Man is to cut his hair and not be covered as a woman, for his head (Christ) is glorified.

We believe the veiling does not only belong to married women, but to all women, young and old. Note the word every" in I Corinthians 11:4-5.

The Word of God is clear that the woman's veiling is not a mere custom, but it is God's norm for all women of the New Testament dispensation. The Corinthian epistle containing this teaching is addressed to the Corinthian Church with all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord.

## **EXCOMMUNICATION AND BAN**

God has an important and great purpose for the church on this earth. The calling of the church is to be a separated people, separated from the world, from uncleanness and sin. The very object of the church is that He (Christ) might ". . . present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27) The Word also says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." (Pet. 1:16b)

Because it is possible that a Christian can forsake the faith and walk with the world, the church has to maintain its position in purity. To be a holy and separated people, it must practice church discipline. The primary reason for discipline and excommunication is to keep the church pure. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (I Cor. 5:6b) If the church tolerates sin, it will affect the whole body.

Another reason for excommunication is that the church openly testifies against sin, so that the erring one may see his spiritual condition. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Cor. 5:5) Scriptural discipline is an act of love in which the church acts in the spirit of love to reveal to the offender the seriousness of his sin, so that he may realize his condition and repent.

Redemptive discipline is outlined in the Scriptures in many different places. There needs to be Scriptural grounds for excommunication. In Matthew 18:15-17 we are taught that when a brother wrongs another and refuses to be reconciled, he needs to be disciplined by the church.

Another ground is given in I Corinthians 5:11: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat." This speaks of one who is called a brother, and yet openly and boldly lives in sin. Sins like these call for immediate excommunication from fellowship, and the individual need not to be exhortated according to the order set forth in Matthew 18:15-17.

Also we read that "A man that is an heretic after the first and

second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Titus 3:10, 11) A heretic is one who chooses and has a self-willed opinion that leads to division and party spirits. This may involve doctrine as well as the standards of the church.

If the person is guilty of any of the above sins, it is the responsibility of the ministry, or whoever it may concern, to admonish him according to Matthew 18:15-17 and Titus 3:10. If these attempts are unsuccessful, the matter must be brought before the church. "But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matt. 18:17b) "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ... To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Cor. 5:5-6) This must be done through the unanimous agreement of the church.

The excommunicated is to be regarded as a "heathen man and a publican." We are not to be in close fellowship with such, so as not to be defiled. For the sinner to realize his standing before the Lord, we are to "... have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (II Thess. 3:14-15) "With such a one no not to eat." (I Cor. 5:11b) For this reason we are not to eat with them. The word "eat" in Greek is not once used pertaining to communion. By not eating with him, we continually remind him of his standing. All this has to be done in the spirit of love and concern for his soul. Should he have a misfortune or be in need, it is our duty to help in a Christ-like way. We who are spiritual are to make a continual effort to restore such a one who has fallen from the truth. It is of great importance that the church works carefully with the Word of God in dealing with a transgressor. Then only will she have power to admonish, as admonishing an excommunicated member is commanded as well as not eating with him. (II Thess. 3:15)

### **THE LAST RESURRECTION AND THE HOPE OF HIS APPEARING**

The occurring of a final bodily resurrection is based on the fact that "... now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (I Cor. 15:20) The message given to the faithful women who visited the tomb on the first day of

the week following his crucifixion was "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead. . . ." (Matt. 28:6-7) The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a fundamental truth of the New Testament. The validity of his teachings, death, atonement, and the reconciliation of God and man rests upon his bodily resurrection. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (I Cor. 15:17)

The church has unitedly borne testimony to the resurrection of Christ. That Jesus rose from the grave was demonstrated to the disciples ". . . by many infallible proofs." (Acts 1:3)

Since Christ rose from the dead, there is victory over sin, the grave, and hell. The outcome of the last resurrection is determined by how man presently relates to the spiritual application of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

"That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4b) "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power." (Rev. 20:6a) The promise is further given that ". . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. 2:11) The second death is that eternal separation from God after the last resurrection.

The resurrection of the dead, both of the righteous and the unrighteous is universal. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28b, 29)

From Revelation 20:13, we see that after this age every individual who ever lived will rise from the dead when soul and body are reunited to appear before God. It is also clear that the works of man is a measure God uses to determine whether man will be resurrected to life or to damnation.

For the righteous it will be a resurrection of life, to receive a crown of glory that fades not away. Tragically the greater part of mankind will rise to the resurrection of damnation. (Matt. 7:13) This resurrection is one of immortality. It is awakening to everlasting life, or to everlasting destruction.

Daniel said, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Daniel 12:2)

The change at the resurrection will be from corruptible to incorruptible. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; therefore that which is sown [buried] a natural body, is raised a spiritual body. (I Cor. 15) As a grain of wheat put into the ground does not spring to life except it first die, so also must all those resurrected come forth from death. (John 12:24)

The resurrection of the dead will take place at the return of Jesus Christ from heaven. They who remain alive at his return, who have not gone through physical death, will be changed, in the twinkling of an eye, in a moment, at the last trump, from the corruptible to the incorruptible. ". . . We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." (I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:51-52) This is the lively hope of the believer. This is the perfection of his redemption. Bodily corruption is the last enemy that is destroyed. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (I Cor. 15:54b) The anticipation of the believer is as John said, "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2b)

After the last resurrection man will stand before God to face judgment. Books will be opened and every man will be judged according to his works. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:15)

The saddest words to fall upon the ears of man will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41b)

The blessed hope of the believer as he awaits the return of Christ is knowing ". . . if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11)

### **THE LAST JUDGMENT**

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27) Judgment is God judging the deeds

of men, at the final day, when history is brought to its fulfillment.

Christ came the first time to bring us salvation, and the second time He will return as the righteous Judge. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son...." (John 5:22-23) Christ will be the final judge, to mete out justice according to His word. The basis on which judgment will be passed is the word spoken by Christ. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48) "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness...." (Acts 17:31) Our status before the judge is determined by how our life compares with the Word of God. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (II Cor. 5:10)

It is very sobering to realize that every soul will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish upon, every soul of man that doeth evil...." (Rom. 2:6-9)

A child of God living according to God's will is in a prepared, watchful state and walks in the light so that that great day does not come upon him as a thief in the night. "For if we would judge ourselves ... we should not be condemned with the world. (I Cor. 11:31-32)

We shall not escape condemnation in the judgment day if we neglect so great a salvation which God's grace offers to us through Jesus Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand,

but the goats on the left." (Matt. 25:31-33) The judgment which will be passed in that final day will be just, eternal, and irreversible. Each individual will determine his own destiny at the judgment day by how he responds to the Gospel of Christ during his life. To those who are regenerated and, as obedient sheep, followed the voice of Christ he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34b) But to those who were unbelievers and followed not the voice of Christ, but followed their own desires and will, He will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

### **HELL**

Hell is at the end of the broad way. Many are those who are headed toward this destruction. (Matt.7:13) When the trump of God shall sound in that last day, there will be a final resurrection of all mankind. "And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John5:29) At that day the final separation will occur. "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (Matt.24:40)

Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt.25:41) The Lord God is gracious and loving, but he is also one of justice and judgment. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (II Pet.3:9) However, he will repay the vengeance that is his, and the usurper (the devil) and the other angels, who left their first estate, will be cast alive into this burning, bottomless pit, where punishment will be meted out in eternal vengeance. (Rom.12:19; Jude 6-7; Isa.14:15; Rev. 19:20) All who were deceived by the devil, who lived according to him, (Eph.2:2) and allowed themselves to be blinded by unbelief, (II Cor.4:4) or were beguiled by his subtlety, (I Cor. 11:3) will meet similar doom. The one single factor that seals such fate is whether one's name is written in the book of life or not. (Rev.20:15) "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil. . . ." (Rom.2:9) The Bible describes this as the second death, where one is forever deprived of any grace and mercy, tormented in everlasting shame and contempt. (Rev. 21:8; Dan.12:2)

Hell is not merely a condition, but an actual "place of torment." Here is "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:44) Death and the grave, while sometimes designated as "hell," are not to be mistaken for the literal, eternal, fire and brimstone hell. All sentenced mortals, then immortal, will have the faculties of memory and pain. (Luke 16:28)

This is the place of outer darkness, (Matt. 22:13) where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where no one can escape, it knows no time or end, (Jude 6; Matt. 24:41), and has no respite of torment. (Rev. 20:10) Hell is where one is banished from the presence of God. (II Thess. 1:9) Scripture describes it as a bottomless pit and when direction is given, it is always down. (Rev. 20:1; Ezek. 31:16)

Hell is God's wrath that is to come. To be in it is to be drinking of the cup of indignation without mixture. (Rev. 14:10) It is truly a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Heb. 10:31)

One does not have to be a notorious sinner to be on the way to hell, but refusal or negligence in doing God's will is reason enough. (Matt. 7:21, 22) Those who live for self, (Luke 16:19) or fail to discipline themselves, (Matt. 5:29, 30) and obey not the gospel of Christ, (II Thess. 1:8) have no hope to escape it. Also those who forget God, (Psa. 9:17) are hypocrites, (Matt. 24:51) do not repent, (Luke 13:3) hate their brother, (Matt. 5:22; I John 3:15) or are proud, (Prov. 16:5, 18; Isa. 13:11; 1 Tim. 3:6) shall be punished in hell.

After contemplating the awfulness of such a place, one does well to seek escape. Jesus pointedly said ". . . except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3)

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55:7)

## HEAVEN

Heaven is the eternal, blessed abode of the triune God, his angels, and all the righteous saints.

Jesus spoke of heaven in terms of comfort. "In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you ... I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." (John 14:2-3) Jesus in his high-priestly prayer, compassionately prayed for the church, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory. . . ." (John 17:24) With this the words of Paul agree, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:17)

Since the believer's calling implies suffering and tribulation here on earth, it is comforting to know that there is a prepared place for the faithful in eternity ". . . God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4) The new heaven and new earth will appear after the first heaven and first earth have passed away. (Rev. 21:1)

The writer to the Hebrews mentions a rest prepared for the people of God, this rest is perfected in heaven. (Heb.4:9) The prophet Isaiah described it as the high and holy place. (Isa. 57:15) High, because it is above all other places. Holy, because it is occupied by holy inhabitants only. The Holy of Holies in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and later in the temple are patterns, primarily of redemption and also of heaven. (Heb.9:1-12, 24) Phrases like, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," and "follow peace and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," tell us of the utmost holiness in heaven. (I Pet.1:16; Heb.12:14)

The Christian's hope of heaven motivates him to live a separated, devout, and holy life. John in the epistle describes it thus: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (I John 3:2-3) The hope of meeting the holy God causes the believer to live accordingly. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever

worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:27)

The writer to the Hebrews calls it a better country where God is not ashamed to be called their God. (Heb.11:16) Since God is not ashamed to be the God of heaven's inhabitants, it follows that they are essentially holy for ". . . Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts . . . ." (Isa.6:3) In heaven there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. (Psa.16:11)

Jesus, in speaking of the believer's conflicts and struggles, through persecution said: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven . . . ." (Matt. 5:12) Another reference to rewards is given in the words: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. 22:12) "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." (I Cor. 3:8) "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." (Heb.10:34)

The way to heaven is spoken of by the prophet Isaiah: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. . . ." (Isa. 35:8) Jesus said, ". . . except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) and ". . . strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life. . . ."

(Matt.7:14) The way is summed up in the words of Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)

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