

OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH

The Church of the Blessed Hope

Cleveland (Chesterland), Ohio

“Let us hold fast this confession of our faith
without wavering.”

—Hebrews 10:23

**SIXTH EDITION
2001**

THE BIBLE

I. THE BIBLE IS GOD'S ONLY WRITTEN REVELATION

THE BOOK, currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles is the only written revelation God has given to man. This revelation was made by the Holy Spirit through God-selected men, is without error, and is the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; I Cor. 2:13; Heb. 1:1; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Cor. 14:37; Neh. 9:20, 30; John 10:35).

II. BELIEF OF THE SCRIPTURES ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

We must believe the doctrines that are taught in the Bible in order to be saved (Matt. 15:14; 2 John 9,12; John 15:6,7; Mark 16:16; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rev. 21:8; Heb. 3:12-19; 2 Thess. 1:10; John 4:41,42; 5:34; 12:48).

THE WORD OF GOD IN THREEFOLD ASPECT

I. AS REVELATION

THE SCRIPTURES have been revealed and inspired by God and are "in truth the word of God" (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:1-4; 2 Peter 1:19, 20; 1 Peter 1:10, 11; John 11:51; Num. 16:28, Gen. 41:16; Dan. 2:30, 28; 1 Thess. 2:13).

II. AS AUTHORITY

Revealed and inspired by God, the Scriptures are the only infallible standard of right. Their unique and exclusive authority destroys all inimical and false standards of authority which are prevalent in the world, among which may be mentioned specifically:

- A. Our hearts (Num. 15:37-40; Deut. 29:19,20,29; Prov. 28:25,26; Jer. 9:13,14; 11:7,8; 23:16,26);
- B. Our thoughts (Acts 26:8-12; John 16:2; Isa. 55:7,8; 2 Cor. 10:4,5);
- C. Our conscience (Acts 23:1,2; 1 Tim. 1:13; 2 Tim. 1:3);
- D. Our ways (Judges 2:19; Isa. 53:6; Hos. 10:13; Isa. 55:6-8); and
- E. Our wills (Gal. 5:16-21; John 5:30; 6:38; Rom. 15:3; Luke 22:40-42; Heb. 10:7).

III. AS THE CRITERION OF GOD'S BLESSINGS AND CURSES

- A. Blessings, if we obey his word (Psa. 32:8, 73:24; Deut. 30:11-20);
- B. Curses, if we disobey it (Acts 20:27; Isa. 30:8-10; Psa. 81:12; Luke 7:30; Prov. 1:24,25; 2 Chron. 36:15,16; Psa. 107:10,11; Prov. 13:13; Isa. 5:24; Zech. 7:11,12; Matt. 15)

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM THE ONLY TRUE GOSPEL

I. MEANING OF THE WORD "GOSPEL"

THE WORD "gospel" comes originally from "god-spell", "god" being an Anglo-Saxon adjective for "good", and "spell" meaning "news". The gospel, then, both etymologically and scripturally, means "good news" or "glad tidings" (Luke 2:10; 8:1; Isa. 61:1).

II. THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED IN BOTH TESTAMENTS

The glad tidings of the gospel, instead of being limited and confined to the pages of the New Testament, as is generally supposed, are also published in the writings of the Old Testament. These were preached to:

- A. The antediluvians (1 Peter 4:6, 2 Peter 2:5);
- B. Abraham (Gal. 3:8);
- C. The Israelites in the wilderness (Heb. 4:1,2);
- D. The contemporaries of David (Heb. 4:7);
- E. The people contemporary with John the Baptist (Mark 1:1,14,15; Luke 16:16);
- F. The house of Israel before the death of Christ (Luke 4:16-22; Mark 1:14; Luke 20:1); and
- G. All who received 'the ministry of the prophets' prior to the birth of Christ (Hos. 12:10; 1 Peter 1:9-12).

III. FOUR GOSPEL CONDITIONS REQUIRED OF SINNERS

God has conditioned the sinner's salvation upon:

- A. Hearing (Deut. 30:10-20; Rom. 10:5-17; Matt. 13:23);
- B. Believing (1 Cor. 1:21; 15:1, 2; Mark 1:14,15; 16:15,16; Rom. 1:16);
- C. Confessing (Rom. 10:8-10; 1 Tim. 6:13; Heb. 10:22,23); and
- D. Obeying the gospel (1 Peter 1:22-25).

IV. SUBJECT MATTER, OR "THE THINGS" COMPOSING THE GOSPEL

The gospel consists of "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ" (Mark 1:14; Luke 4:18,43; 8:1; 9:2,6; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,30,31).

V. "THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM" THE ONLY TRUE GOSPEL

"The gospel of the kingdom," consisting of "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," is the only true gospel. A double curse has been pronounced against either man or angel who shall dare to "pervert" this gospel, or preach "any other" (Gal. 1:6-9).

THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I. WHAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS

THE KINGDOM of God will be a divine political dominion established upon the earth (Dan. 2:44; 7:13,14; Rev. 11:15; Isa. 32:1; 11:9,10; Hag. 2:22; Psa. 2:8,9).

II. WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE SET UP

At the close of the times of the Gentiles God will send Christ in person to the earth to "set up" the kingdom of God (Acts 3:20,21; Psa. 102:13,16,21; 2 Tim. 4:1; Luke 19:12-16; Acts 1:9,11; Dan. 7:13-27; Matt. 25:31,34).

III. WHERE THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE LOCATED

The kingdom of God will be established on earth in the land bequeathed to Abraham for an everlasting inheritance. It will be the kingdom of Israel restored (Micah 4:6-8; Amos 9:11,15; Ezek. 37:21,22; Jer. 23:3,8; Gen. 13:14-17; Heb. 11:8,9; Gal. 3:16; Lev. 26:42; Micah 7:20).

IV. WHAT CONSTITUTES "THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

"The things concerning the kingdom of God" are its component parts. Analytically collocated "the things" which compose the kingdom are:

- A. **The King:** Christ (Zech. 9:9; 14:9; John 19:19,22);
- B. **The Associates of the King: the saints of all generations constitute, with Christ their head, the collective "seed of Abraham," in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed** (Dan. 12:2; Luke 13:28; Rev. 11:18; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; John 5:28,29; 6:39,40; Luke 14:14; 1 Cor. 15:50-58; Matt. 25: 31,34);
- C. **The Laws:** such as Christ and his associate rulers (the saints) shall make, and by which they will govern the world in justice and love (Isa. 2:3; 42:4; Zech. 14:16-19);
- D. **The Subjects** both Jews and Gentiles; the Jews and Israelites (the twelve tribes) being "the first dominion," and the Gentiles the second (Isa. 11:12; Jer. 31:10; Zech. 8:7,8; Micah 4:6-8; Luke 1:31-33; Matt. 19:28; Zech. 2:11);

- E. **The Capital City:** “Jerusalem, the city of the Great King”, and the metropolis of the whole earth (Matt. 5:34,35; Jer. 3:17; Micah 4:8; Joel 3:16,17; Isa 24:23; Zech. 2:10,12; Psa. 48:1-8; 122:2-7; 132:11-18); and
- F. **The Territory:** Palestine primarily, and “the uttermost parts of the earth” finally (Matt. 6:10; Rev. 11:15; Psa. 2; Dan. 7:27).

SETTING UP THE KINGDOM A DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

I. SETTING UP THE KINGDOM IS A DESTRUCTIVE WORK

WHEN CHRIST returns to establish the kingdom of God the earth is baptized in judgment-fire (Isa. 66:15,16; Psa. 50:3-6; Mal. 4:1,2; Jer. 30:23,24; Psa. 21:9; 11:6; Jer. 25:33).

II. SETTING UP THE KINGDOM IS ALSO A CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

Nevertheless, in wrath, God remembers mercy. The outgoings of His wrath are destructive, deadly, and extensive, but not universal (Heb. 3:2; Gen. 6:7,8,17,18; 7:23; 8:1,18-22; 9:1; 2 Peter 2:5; Isa. 34,35; Jer. 4; Zeph. 1; Acts 2:19-21; 3:19-23).

III. THE SUBJECTS OF THE KINGDOM SCRIPTURALLY DEFINED

In mercy God also remembers justice. The out-flowing of his mercy are constructive, rehabilitating, and magnificent, but circumscribed. In the advent judgments of Christ the mercy and justice, the goodness and severity of God (Rom. 11:22) operate to spare some (the minority) and destroy others (the majority). In direct opposition to world burners who depopulate the earth, and Restorationists who repopulate it by a universal

resurrection that all may have a “fair chance” to be saved during the reign of Christ, we affirm that:

- A. The subjects of the kingdom consist only of a “remnant,” a residue composed of the meek, willing, and well-disposed of mankind who are alive at the time of its establishment (Isa. 1:19,20; 24:6; 11:11,16; Zeph. 3:12; Zech. 14:16; Micah 4:1-7; Ezek. 39:2; 20:33,38).
- B. These “remnant” subjects are composed almost entirely of infants and children (Deut 1:39; Psa. 8:2; Matt. 21:15, 16; Psa. 22:30,31; 102:18,28; 127:3; Isa. 1:6,8; Zech. 8:5; 13:7-9; Luke 18:16).

THE THOUSAND YEARS’ REIGN OF CHRIST

I. THE GRACIOUS PURPOSE OF CHRIST’S REIGN IS TO SUBDUE “ALL ENEMIES”

THE MISSION of Christ’s reign on earth is to extirpate “all enemies” from the earth, which is now “subject to vanity” (Rom. 8:20). The specifications of evil here given as vanquished by his reign are representative only:

- A. All human governments shall be abolished (Isa. 24:21-33; Rev. 19:11-20; Isa. 17:13,14; Psa. 2:4,5; 110:5,6; 1 Sam. 2:10; Dan. 2:44; 7:13,14; Psa. 74:20; Rev. 11:15; Psa. 72).
- B. There will be but one kingdom “under the whole heaven,” the kingdom of God (Psa. 2:1-12; 72:8; Dan. 2:44; 7:27; Num. 24:17; Rev. 11:15; Zech. 14:9; 9:10).
- C. There will be but one religion, the true one, the religion of Christ and his kingdom (Isa. 45:23-25; 52:1,7-10; 66:17-23; Zech. 14:16; 8:23; 9:7; Rev. 5:9-14; Zeph. 3:9, Mal. 1:11).
- D. All idols and idolaters shall be destroyed (Isa. 2:18; 42:17; Psa. 97:7; Zech. 13:2).
- E. War “shall cease to the ends of the earth” (Psa. 46:9; Isa. 2:4; 9:5; Hos. 2:18; Zech. 9:10; Ezek. 39:9, 10; Rev. 20:1-3).
- F. Premature death will exist no more (Isa. 65:20-23; Zech. 8:4,5).
- G. The land of Israel shall be transformed from barrenness to fertility, being made beautiful, fruitful, and glorious (Isa. 35:1; 41:18-20; Amos 9:13-15; Isa. 60:13; 65:17-25; Zech. 8:3-8,12).
- H. The city of Jerusalem will be built again, broadened, enlarged, and adorned by “the precious things” of all nations (Psa. 72:10; Isa. 26:15 [RV]; Zech. 14:20 [RV]; Isa. 33:17 [RV]; Jer. 31:38; Isa. 60:10-18; Hag. 2:6-9; Jer. 3:17).
- I. The Jews and Israelites will become fast friends and a united nation with whom the Gentiles will join to yield a national and happy obedience to the King of kings, the Lord of hosts and ruler of the whole earth (Zech. 8:23; Jer. 3:17,18; Rev. 15:4; Isa. 25:7,8; 2:2,3; 45:14-25; Ezek. 37:21-24).
- J. There will be a sevenfold increase of light, both solar and lunar (Isa. 4:5; 30:26; 60:19; Zech. 2:5; 14:6, 7; Rev. 21:11, 18,22-26; 22:5).
- K. The earth and its animal inhabitants, to a large extent, will partake of the blessings of the times (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25; Hos. 2:18; Ezek. 34:25,28; Rom. 8:19-23; Rev. 22:3).

II. THE REIGN OF CHRIST IS A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

The subjects of the kingdom of God, the remnants of the Jewish and Gentile nations who “find grace” (Jer. 31:2) and as “the left of the nations” (Zech. 14:16) at the coming of Christ and the setting up of the kingdom of God, multiply rapidly with the pangs of child-birth mitigated. They soon develop into numerous and strong nations. Some of the people are righteous, and some of them are wicked. Sin and death continue among both classes in a modified form during the reign of Christ (Gen. 3:15,16; 1 Tim. 2:15; Ex. 1:19; Isa. 66:7-9; Lev. 23:10-20; 1 Cor. 15:23-26; Mal. 3:18; Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:1; 5:10; Ezek. 44:22,25; Isa. 65:20; Zech. 8:4; Isa. 60:21).

III. A "LITTLE SEASON" OF JUDGMENT AFTER THE REIGN EXPIRES

During this "season" the just and the unjust of that age, including both the living and the dead, are judged. The righteous are approved and immortalized; the wicked are rejected and consigned to shame and the second death. Mortality has now been abolished by salvation and destruction, and death, "the last enemy", destroyed (Rev. 20; 21; 1 Cor. 15:24-28).

IV. CHRIST'S SUPREMACY ENDS: GOD'S DIRECT SUPREMACY BEGINS

With the abolition of "all enemies" from the presence of the Lord and from the face of the earth, there comes a change in the administration of the kingdom of God. With all the wicked "cut off," none remain but the righteous, who are redeemed, glorified, and immortalized, and who inherit the earth forever. Christ's work as Prophet, Priest, Savior, and King is finished; and he presents a redeemed earth and a glorified people to his Father, who takes the kingdom into His own hands and reveals Himself without mediation (Matt. 5:8; 1 Cor. 11:3; 15:23-28; Eph. 1:10,22; Heb. 2:5-9, Rev. 21:1-7; 22:3).

THE FATHER AND SON

I. THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, THE FATHER

THE "ONE GOD" of the Old Testament is revealed as "the Father" in the New Testament. The popular doctrine of the Trinity confuses the revealed relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and destroys monotheism to make room for polytheism -- supplants Christianity to establish Paganism (Deut. 6:4; Mnrk 12:29-32; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Eph 4:6; John 17:3; Isa. 45:5).

II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, having been begotten of Mary by the Holy Spirit without the intervention of man (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20; Isa 9:6; Acts 2:22; 10:38; John 14:10; Matt 3:16,17; John 3:34,35; 5:30; 14:28; 7:16; Matt. 19:17; Mark 15:34).

III. JESUS CHRIST IS BOTH A MEDIATOR AND AN ADVOCATE

Notwithstanding the miraculous manner of his conception and his subsequent anointing with the Holy Spirit, Jesus was made of our nature. He died, was buried, rose again, and ascended to heaven where he is now an officiating mediator between the Father and sinners who come to God by him, and an advocate for his own house, the church of God (1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14; Gal. 4:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:21,45; Rom. 5:15,19; Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14,15; 8:1; Luke 24:31; Acts 5:31; 15:14; John 17:9; 1 John 2:1).

IV. POSTHUMOUS PROBATION AND SALVATION UNSCRIPTURAL

Christ's mediation for the world and his advocacy for the church provide adequate means for the salvation of all in the world and in the church who make their calling and election sure. Probation for both, therefore, is limited to this life (Isa. 38:18-20; Psa.

88:10-12; Eccl. 9:5-10; 6:3-6; Hos. 13:14; 2 Cor. 6:1-3; Luke 4:19; Psa. 69:13; Isa. 55:3,6; Heb. 3:6,7,13,15). Posthumous probation is exceedingly reprehensible as it either represents the means of salvation which God has provided as insufficient, or repudiates Christ's mediation for the world altogether. The following indictments of the doctrine are sufficient to show its anti-scriptural nature:

- A. Posthumous probation belittles angelic ministrations (Psa. 68:17; Dan. 7:10; Psa. 103:20; 34:7; Matt. 2: 13,10,20; 4:11; 26:53; 18:10; Ex 23:20-23; Heb. 1:14; Acts 8:26-39);
- B. It slurs the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:6; 16:7-14; Rom. 8:26);
- C. It emasculates the word of God (Acts 13:44-48; John 17:19,20; Acts 18:10,11; Isa. 55:10,11; Heb. 4:12; Jer. 23:28,29; Num. 11:23);
- D. It denies the sufficiency of Christ's mediatorial prerogatives (Luke 23:34; Acts 2:23,37-41; John 1:46-49; Acts 5:31; Matt. 28:18; 1 Peter 3:22; Heb. 2:18; 4:15,16; 5:2; 7:25; Rom. 8:26-28,32-39); and
- E. It charges God with incompetence and insufficiency (Gen. 21:17,20; 1 Sam. 2:18,26; 3:1,7,19; Isa. 45: 1,4; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:15; Gal. 1:16; John 4:23; Acts 8; 10; Isa. 45:19; 59:1-3; 55:6,7,10,11).

V. DESTRUCTION OF THE DEVIL BY THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

The death of Christ was a necessary sacrifice for sin in order that the law of sin and death, introduced into the world by the disobedience of the first Adam, might be nullified through the obedience of the second Adam who obtained a full discharge of its claims by a temporary surrender to its power. Thus, immortality by resurrection was acquired in his own case, and through him will also be acquired by all believers in harmony with the law of obedience. In Christ sin is taken away, and righteousness is established. The devil, a word which is used interchangeably with "sin," has been abolished in the person of Christ; and its power will also be abolished so far as his people are concerned when he redeems, immortalizes, and makes them like himself (John 1:29; Heb. 9:26; John. 3:16; Gal. 1:4; Titus 2:14; Acts 10:43; Rom. 3:25; Acts 4:12; Rom. 1:3,4; 2 Cor. 13:4; 6:9; Eph. 1:20,21; Heb. 2:14; Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:26; 12:4; John 13:2; 6:70; Acts 5:3,9; Jas. 1:14,15; Eph. 2:2; 1 Tim. 5:14,15; Matt. 16:23; Mark 8:33; Luke 4:8; 1 Thess. 2:18; Rev. 2:10,12,13; Psa. 68:21; Jer. 51:20).

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIFTS

I. THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS DIVINE, RADIANT POWER

THE SPIRIT of God is not a distinct person from the Father, but his radiant power and energy in universal diffusion (Gen. 1:2; Psa. 139:2-12; Job 33:4; 26:13; Psa. 104:30; Judges 14:6; Num. 27:18; Neh. 9:30; 2 Peter 1:21).

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE POWER OF GOD IN OFFICIAL MANIFESTATION

The Holy Spirit is God's "free spirit" gathered up, concentrated, and focalized for the work of creation, the bestowal of miraculous gifts, and the accomplishment of divine results (Psa. 51:11,12; Luke 1:35; Acts 10:38; 1:5-8; 2; 11:15,16; 8:17-19; Micah 3:8).

III. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WERE ONLY TEMPORARY POWERS

The gifts of the Holy Spirit which were bestowed upon the official members of the church in the days of the apostles, accomplished the purpose for which they were given and, accordant with reason and revelation, they ceased from the earth, not to exist again until the kingdom of God comes. That they were only temporary gifts and powers appears from the considerations following:

- A. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are "the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6:4,5).
- B. When they were bestowed upon men in the past they were given in a limited and measured form, except in the case of Christ. They were but foretastes, first-fruits, earnest, and prophetic intimations of the feast of heavenly powers, which we shall enjoy in full when the Kingdom of God shall come (Matt. 10:7; 12:28; Luke 9:1; 11:20; Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14).
- C. Christ excepted, they have been seldom possessed and rarely exercised in the past (1 Cor. 12:27-30; Eph. 4:8-12; 1 Sam. 3:1; Luke 4:23-28; John 10:41).

IV. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE NOT EXTANT TODAY

The following arguments are conclusive on this point:

- A. When the gifts of the Holy Spirit were possessed they were employed punitively in association with their benevolent uses (Ex. 4:6-8; 8:13,17,29; 9:22,29; Num. 12:10,13; 2 Kings 5:14,27; Isa. 38:1,2; Acts 5; 8:20,24; 13:9-11).
- B. The design and purpose of God in giving them was fulfilled in a confirmed word and completed revelation. Spirit gifts now are superfluous, and if they existed they would discredit the word of God (John 14:26; 16:12; Eph. 4:7,8,11-16; 2 Cor. 13:9; 1 Thess 3:9,10; Col. 2:10; Acts 20: 17-23; John 20:30,31; 1 John 5:10-13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Jude 3 [Greek]).
- C. The prophetic word requires the cessation of miraculous powers now, and existing facts corroborate the prophecy (Psa. 74:7-10; Micah 3:6-12; 1 Cor. 13:8-13).

THE NATURE OF MAN

I. THE SOUL

"SOUL," as used in the Bible, means primarily a creature or person, and is employed to express the variety of aspects in which that creature can be contemplated, such as person, life, mind, disposition, etc.; but in no instance does it express the idea of immortality (Gen. 1:20,24,30; Job 12:10; Num. 31:28; Isa. 29:8; Prov. 6:30; Jos. 11:11; Jer. 2:34; Job

7:15; Psa. 105:18 [margin]; Judges 16:30; Acts 3:23; Isa. 38:17; 53:11,12; Matt. 10:28; Rev. 16:3).

II. THE SPIRIT

“Spirit”, as employed in the Bible, signifies breath, life, energy, mind, disposition, etc.; but it is never used to express the idea of an immortal principle in man (Gen. 6:17; 7:15; Ecc1. 3:18-21; Psa. 104:29,30; Jas. 2:26; Jos. 5:1; Gen. 3:8 [margin]; 8:1).

III. THE GHOST

“Ghost” does not refer to an immortal entity in man, but to the expiration of his life (Gen. 6:17; 7:21,22; 25:8; Mark 15:37,39; Luke 23:46).

IV. MAN IS A CREATURE OF THE DUST AND MORTAL BECAUSE OF SIN

- A. Man is often declared to be mortal (Job 4:17; Rom. 5:12; Gen. 3:19,22,23; 1 Cor. 15:22; Psa 49; 89:48; Gen. 7:22; Isa. 2:22);
- B. Man is affirmed to be unconscious in death (Psa. 6:5; Eccl. 9:5,6,10; Psa. 146:3,4; Isa. 38:18,19; Job 3:11-17; 14:10-12; 10:18,19; Psa. 39:12; Acts 2:29-34; 13:36; Gen. 15:15);
- C. Immortality is a conditional gift offered to man through Christ (2 Tim. 1:10; John 6:40; Rom. 2:7; 6:23; 1 John 2:25; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Rom. 8:24,25; Gal. 6:8; Mark 10:30; Luke 20:35,36; John 17:2; 1 John 2:17);
- D. Man obtains immortality at the resurrection (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28,29; Luke 14:14; John 6:39,40,44; 11:24; 1 Thess. 4:16; Isa. 26:19; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:13,14, 42-44, 51-53; Job 19:25-27; Phil. 3:8, 11, 20-21; and
- E. After he obtains immortality he enjoys it on the earth (Prov. 10:30; 11:31; Matt. 5:5; Psa. 37; Rom. 4:13; Heb. 11; Rev. 5:10; Dan. 7:27).

V. IRRESPONSIBLE MEN ARE NOT RAISED FROM THE DEAD

Those of mankind who are ignorant of the gospel are not eligible to either reward for obedience or punishment for disobedience post-resurrectionally. They are irresponsible, and they pass away in death as though they had never existed.

- A. They are irresponsible, mortal, and comparatively worthless (Psa. 39:5; 103:14-17; 144:3,4; Isa. 40:6-8,15,17; Dan. 4:35).
- B. Their existence terminates forever in death (Isa. 26:13,14; Jer. 51:39,57; Prov. 21:16; Eph. 4:17,18; 2 Cor. 4:3; Psa. 49; Isa. 43:17; Psa. 17: 14; 73:22; 88:4,5; Amos 8:11-14; Oba. 16; Job 3:11-19; 10:18,19; Eccl. 6:1-6).

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

I. RESURRECTION

RESURRECTION is a future awakening to life and consciousness of people who are dead and in the dust of the earth (Job 14:13,14; 19:26,27; Psa. 17:15; 49:15; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:1,2; 1 Cor. 15).

II. THE SUBJECTS OF RESURRECTION

Those who are raised from the dead consist of two classes only: the just and the unjust, the righteous and the wicked, both of whom have enjoyed the privilege of a knowledge of the gospel (John 3:18,19; 9:40,41; 15:22,24; Jas. 4:17; Rom. 4:15; Acts 17:23,30,31; Luke 12:47,48).

III. THE REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The righteous are those who have learned, believed, and obeyed the gospel. Those righteous who are dead come forth at the resurrection and, in company with those righteous who are alive at the coming of Christ, reign with him as immortal joint-heirs of the Kingdom, co-possessors of the earth, and joint-administrators of God's authority among men in everything (1 Cor. 15:50-54). The kingdom of God is the inheritance to which they are called by the gospel, and it is that which is presented as the object of hope (1 Thess. 2:12; Luke 12:32; Jas. 2:5; Matt. 25:34; 2 Peter 1:11; Luke 13:29; John 3:5; 1 Cor. 15:50; 6:9).

IV. THE DESTINY OF THE WICKED

That class, which is called "the unjust", embraces apostates and all others who have known the gospel whether they have believed and obeyed it or not. They come forth at the resurrection and, in company with the wicked who are alive at the time, are:

- A. Cast into hell (Mark 9:43; Isa. 66:24; Matt. 10:28; Jude 7; Isa. 34:8-10; Matt. 3:12; Psa. 21:8,9; Heb. 12:29; Mal. 4:1-3; Rev. 21:8; Rom. 1:32);
 - B. Where they are consigned to death with attendant circumstances of shame and suffering (Psa. 37:10,20,34; 2 Thess. 1:9, 10; Job 20:5-8; Psa. 145:20; 104:35; Job 21:30; 2 Cor. 2:10; Prov. 13:13).
- ### V. RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED) IS SIMULTANEOUS

Both classes have:

- A. A simultaneous resurrection (Dan. 12:1,2; John 5:28,29; 1 Cor. 15:51,52; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 11:15,18); and

- B. A simultaneous execution of judgment (Matt. 10:32,33; Mark 8:38; Rev. 21:7,8; 22:12-15; Matt. 16:24-27; 7:21-23; 25:10,14-46; 13:38-43; John 5:28,29; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5-16; 2 Cor. 5:9-11; 4:5; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; Col. 1:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 2:19,20; 1 John 2:28; 4:17; Rev. 3:5; 1 Tim. 5:24,25; 2 Tim. 4:1).

BAPTISM: ACTS, SUBJECTS AND DESIGN

I. THE ACT

IMMERSION is essential to the ordinance of baptism as evidenced from:

- A. The meaning of the word baptism (Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., 1:87; Schaff's Hist. Apostolic Church, pp. 568-9; American Cyclopaedia, Article "Baptism"; Stanley's Hist. Eastern Church, Scribner's Edition, p. 117; Conybeare and Howson on Rom. 6:4; Burrow's Sermon on the Doctrine of the Sacraments);
- B. The figurative uses of the word (1 Cor. 10:2; 1 Peter 3:20, 21; Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38,39; John 3:5; Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 1:5; Luke 24:49; Acts 2; 2 Cor. 5:2-4); and
- C. The combination of circumstances attending the ordinance (Matt. 3:6,16; John 3:5,23; Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:4,5).

II. THE SUBJECTS

- A. Only believers of the gospel are proper subjects for baptism (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:37-41; 6:7; 8:12,36,37; 10; 11:14; 16:30-34; 18:8; Eph. 4:5).
- B. The immersion of those ignorant of the gospel is invalid after such have learned and believed the gospel of the kingdom they must be immersed again (Eph. 4:5; Rom. 16:26; 8:24 [Greek]; Acts 19:1 -5).

III. THE DESIGN

Baptism expresses the faith of the candidate in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the means of his introduction into Christ, beginning a union, which is preparatory to perfect assimilation at the resurrection. To the sinner, therefore, it is essential to:

- A. The remission of sins (Mark 1:5; Luke 1:76,77; Acts 2:38-41; 10:43,48; 1 Peter 3:21; Col. 2:12,13; Titus 3:5-7; Rom. 6:3-5,17,18); and
- B. An adoption into Christ with an heirship of the gospel, salvation, and the kingdom of God (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27-29).

THE COMMANDMENTS OF CHRIST

I. THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN MUST NOT BE OBSERVED

THE COMMANDMENTS and doctrines of men are legion (Col. 2:22). Here we have only space to mention

- A. Keeping the Sabbath in this dispensation (Gal. 3:8,17; Gen. 2:3; Ex. 19:18; 2 Kings 18:11,12; Deut. 5:2,3; Neh 9:13,14; Gal. 3; 4; 2 Cor. 3; Col. 2:16-22; Acts 15:28,24);
- B. Ceremonial feet washing (John 12:1-3; 13:1-16; 1 Tim. 5:9, 10); and
- C. Numerous annullments and emendations relating to the Lord's supper (Matt. 26:26; 1 Cor. 11:24; 10:10; 11:26,28; Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:14; Acts 15:29).

II. THE COMMANDMENTS OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES MUST BE OBEYED

- A. After baptism our final salvation depends upon keeping the commandments of Christ (Matt. 28:20; John 15:14; 13:17; Matt 7:21; John 15:10; 1 John 2:4; Rev. 22:14).
- B. The commandments of Christ include those which he gave by his apostles (1 Cor. 14:37; Luke 21: 15; John 16:7; 15:26; Matt. 10:19,20; Acts 2:33; 1 John 4:6; John 20:21; Matt. 10:16).

III. SOME OF THE COMMANDMENTS DEFINITELY STATED

The commandments of God are numerous. The following are definitely specified because the servants of God may overlook them, and are entirely ignored and disobeyed by the world. Christ and his apostles:

- A. Condemn retaliation and all evil speaking (Matt. 5:44; 1 Peter 3:9; 2:1; Rom. 12:14);
- B. Insist on peace-making and personal, private communication with the offender with this in view (Matt. 5:24; 18:15; Col. 3:13);
- C. Command kindness to the undeserving and the evil (Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:35); and
- D. Prohibit participation in any armed force as combatants. If our members are called upon by any selective service system, we teach and encourage our members to serve only in alternative service as total conscientious objectors.

Our objection must be to any form of involvement in the organizations of man which require of us service contrary to God's principles to which we are devoted (Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10; Matt. 5:38-48; John 6:15; 1 Peter 2:21-23; Isa. 53:9; Rom. 12:2, 14-21; 1 Thess. 5:15; Heb. 12:14; Jas 5:12).

IV. THE BREAKING OF BREAD IS A COMMANDMENT OF CHRIST

- A. From the observance of this ordinance the Church of The Blessed Hope must debar the world, exclude adherents to false religions, and excommunicate its own members for doctrinal and moral transgressions (Matt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:8-11; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10,11; Gal. 5:9,12; 6:14).

- B. Its observance on the part of baptized believers is essential to acceptance with God (Psa. 116:12-14; Song 1:12; John 6:53-56; Matt 26:26-28; Exo. 12; 1 Cor. 5:7,8; Heb. 10:22-29,38,39; 1 John 1:6-10; 2:1-3; 5:3-6).

V. THE BREAKING OF BREAD REQUIRES WEEKLY OBSERVANCE

- A. The Church of The Blessed Hope is the house of God (1 Cor. 3:16,17; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 10:21).
- B. In the house of God there is always the table of the Lord (1 Cor. 10:21; Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5-9; Heb 3:6).
- C. The breaking of bread includes the drinking of the cup as part of the institution (Matt. 26:27; 1 Cor. 11:20; Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 10:16; Acts 2:42).
- D. The breaking of bread is a weekly memorial of the Lord's death, and is an indispensable part of worship in all stated meetings of the Church (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; 11:20-26; 10:16; Matt 26:29).

DEAR READER:

A member of the Church presents this "Confession of Faith" with the devout entreaty and earnest prayer that you will "search the Scriptures daily" and see if the things herein confessed are so (Acts 17:11; 1 Tim. 6:12-14; Heb. 10:23). If this resume of the faith is too brief to understand satisfactorily, procure a copy of "Bible Lessons on First Principles". In this work you will find this "Confession" elaborated by reason, logic, and scriptural argumentation. Should you desire personal instruction in gospel truth, or fraternity on the basis of the gospel as here outlined, your wishes may be gratified by expressing them to any member, Deacon, Elder, or by calling upon the Pastor.

OUR OFFICIAL CONFESSION OF FAITH

Therefore, Be it Resolved: That the congregation of the Church of The Blessed Hope, Cleveland, Ohio, assembled this 27th day of August, 1933, do hereby adopt and endorse as our "Original Confession of Faith," the truths and tenets of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, as set forth in the booklet mentioned in the preamble to this resolution and titled as follows:

"OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH"
The Church of The Blessed Hope
Cleveland, Ohio

"Let us hold fast this confession of our faith without wavering."
-Hebrews 10:23

Also, be it resolved that: In all future printings or editions of "Our Confession of Faith" this original endorsement of its adoption shall be printed verbatim on the last page, together with the date of such adoption.

The foregoing resolution was presented to the Church of The Blessed Hope, Cleveland, Ohio, on the 27th day of August, 1933, and its adoption moved by George Wagner, the motion was seconded by Alfred Shillitto, and the affirmative vote was unanimous.

Robert G. Huggins, Pastor
Lawrence E. Gibbs, Secretary
George E. Kieffer, President of the Official Board

Revisions

November 14, 1978 - Military Service

April 11, 1989 - Military Service

September 10, 1995 - Emergence

Copies and further information can be secured by contacting

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