

Sommerfeld Mennonite Church



New Life Class

CATECHISM

Brief Lessons from the Holy Scriptures
in Questions and Answers

Presented to

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on

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Outline and questions are taken from the edited, and seventh printing of the 2001 Catechism which was published by the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church in Manitoba, Canada.

This version of the Catechism has been condensed and updated in 2019 with the English Standard Version (ESV) translation of the Bible and distributed only to students attending New Life Classes in the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church in Ontario, Canada.

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INTRODUCTION

1. What should be our chief aim in this life?

To live in God's fellowship and grace, enjoy his favour, and obtain eternal happiness hereafter.

- Matthew 6:33

2. Must we provide for the needs of the body?

Yes, but in a Christian manner, seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

- Matthew 6:31-34

3. What is the kingdom of God?

At the present time, it is within all the believers and its essential qualities are righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; in its fullness it is the coming universal kingdom of righteousness under Christ.

- Luke 17:21, Romans 14:17, Revelation 21:4

4. How do we become members of the kingdom?

By faith in God and Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

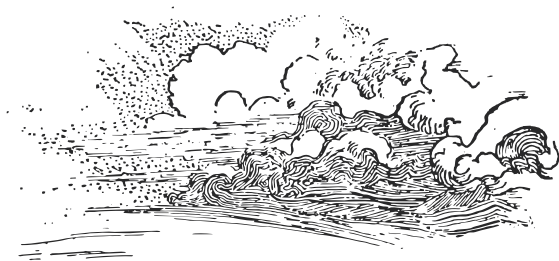
- John 17:3, Hebrews 11:6

5. Is it enough to profess faith with the mouth only?

No. Faith must work by love.

- Galatians 5:6

PART 1



The Creation

CHAPTER 1: God the Creator of all Things

1. Who created all things?

God; "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

- Genesis 1:1

2. Who is God?

The one God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Matthew 28:19, 1 John 5:7

3. How can we know that there is a God?

Nature, the conscience, and the testimony of the Holy Scriptures teach us that there is a God.

- Romans 1:19-20, Deuteronomy 6:4-5

I. The Knowledge of God from Nature

4. How does nature teach us that there is a God?

All created things teach us that there must necessarily be a God, who created all things.

- Job 12:7-10, Acts 17:24-28

5. What testimony does Paul give on this subject?

He says: "For what can be known about God is plain to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse"

- Romans 1:19-20

II. The Knowledge of God from the Holy Scriptures

6. What do the Scriptures say that God is?

That God is a spirit.

- John 4:24, 2 Corinthians 3:17

7. What additional testimony does it give of God?

That he is the one living God, eternal and unchangeable in his being; that he is unfathomable, all-seeing, all-knowing, omnipotent and omnipresent; that he is perfect in love, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, and that he is most gracious, benevolent, merciful and long-suffering.

- Deuteronomy 6:4, Psalm 90:2, James 1:17, Acts 10:33, Jeremiah 23:23-24, Psalm 94:11, Romans 16:27, Genesis 17:1, Isaiah 6:3, Deuteronomy 32:4, Romans 11:33, Psalm 103:8

8. Is this all the Scriptures have to say about God?

They say a great deal more about God as anyone can find for themselves.

- John 5:39

III. The Holy Scriptures

9. What are we to understand by the Holy Scriptures?

The writings of the Old and New Testament, called the Bible.

10. Are these writings the word of God?

They are. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

- 2 Timothy 3:16

11. Were they not written by the will of men?

No. Holy men of God spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

- 2 Peter 1:21

12. Are the Scriptures the infallible truth?

They are. For all things foretold of Christ in Scripture have been literally fulfilled.

- Matthew 26:56, Luke 24, 26-27

13. Is it profitable for us to diligently to read the Scriptures?

It is. For if we know the Holy Scriptures from childhood, they are able to make us wise for salvation; but we must pray to God for His Holy Spirit to enlighten our understanding.

- 2 Timothy 3:15, Ephesians 1:18, James 1:5

CHAPTER 2: God Revealed as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

1. What do the Scriptures further teach concerning God?

That God revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- 1 John 5:7, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Matthew 3:16-17

2. What do the Scriptures testify of God the Father?

That He is the true Father over all called children in heaven and earth; that He is the Father of all believers and that He is in a special manner, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Ephesians 3:15, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 2 Corinthians 1:3

3. What is said in the Scriptures of Christ, the Son of God?

That He is the true and only begotten Son of God.

- Psalm 2:7, Romans 8:32, John 1:14

4. Is Jesus Christ the Son of God from all eternity?

Yes. He was with the Father before the world was; whose going forth have been from of old, from ancient days.

- John 17:5, Micah 5:2

5. Is He also true God?

Yes. He is the true God, and eternal life.

- 1 John 5:20

6. What do the Scriptures teach concerning the Holy Spirit?

That He is a true Holy Spirit, sent from the Father by the Son, therefore coming from the Father and the Son.

- John 15:26, John 14:26

7. Is the Holy Spirit also called God?

Yes. For when Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit, Peter said, "You have not lied to man, but to God."

- Acts 5:3-4

8. Are then the Father, Son and Holy Spirit three Gods?

No. There is only one God, for these three are one.

- Mark 12:29, 1 John 5:7

CHAPTER 3: How God Created Everything

1. By whom did God create all things?

He created all things by Jesus Christ, through whom he also made the world.

- Ephesians 3:9, Hebrews 1:2

2. Did the Holy Spirit also have a part in the work of creation?

Yes. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

- Psalm 33:6

3. In how many days did God create all things?

In six days, God made heaven and earth and all things and rested on the seventh day and blessed and sanctified it.

- Genesis 1-2

I. The Creation of Man

4. What did God create in His own image?

God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them.

- Genesis 1:27

5. How many human beings did God create in the beginning?

Only two; Adam and Eve. From them all mankind has descended.

- Acts 17:26

6. Out of what was Adam created?

Out of the dust of the ground; and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

- Genesis 3:7

7. How was Eve created?

The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and God took one of the ribs and made a woman from it and brought her to him.

- Genesis 2:21-22

8. Where did the Lord God place our first parents, Adam and Eve?

In a garden in Eden.

- Genesis 2:8

II. The Creation of the Angels

9. Are there also created beings in heaven?

Yes. The Angels.

- Hebrews 1:6-7, Colossians 1:16

10. What are angels?

They are ministering spirits.

- Hebrews 1:7-14, Ephesians 3:10

11. For what purpose did God create angels?

To praise and extol God, and minister to the good of his children.

- Isaiah 6:1-3, Matthew 18:10, Psalm 34:7, Daniel 10:13

12. Did some of the angels rebel against God?

Yes. Some left their proper dwelling and are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness until the judgment of the great day.

- Isaiah 14:12-15, Jude 6, Ephesians 6:12

13. What are they called?

Evil spirits or devils.

- Luke 7:21, Mark 5:12

14. What is their nature and activity?

They are enemies of God and seek the eternal destruction of mankind.

- 1 Peter 5:8

CHAPTER 4: God the Preserver and Ruler of the World

1. Does God provide for His creatures?

Yes. He causes the grass to grow for the beast, and herb for man. He gives food to all in his time, life and breath and everything.

- Psalm 104:14, Psalm 145:15, Acts 17:25

2. Can anything live without God's care?

No. For if he takes away their breath, they die.

- Psalm 104:29

3. Does God govern all things He created?

Yes. He governs the nations upon the earth, and he will reign forever and ever.

- Psalm 67:4

4. Can we understand God's care and government?

No. God's ways are past finding out, and his judgments are unsearchable.

- Romans 11:33, Psalm 147:5

5. What does all this teach us?

That we should trust in God, our Creator, preserver, and ruler, cast all our care upon him, and seek his kingdom and his righteousness, trusting that all things will be added to us.

- Matthew 6:33, 1 Peter 5:7

PART 2



The Fall of Man

CHAPTER 1: The Condition of Man Before the Fall

1. What was man's condition in Paradise?

It was glorious and highly blessed.

- Genesis 1:28-31

2. Was man created good?

Yes. God made man upright. He created man in his own image, after his own likeness.

- Ecclesiastes 7:29, Genesis 1:27

3. In what way does man's likeness relate to God?

Man was created after God's righteousness and true holiness.

- Ephesians 4:24

4. Did Adam and Eve continue in their blessed condition?

No. They sinned and fell away from God - they and all their descendants.

- Romans 5:12-19

I. The Fall of Man

5. What sin against God did our first parents commit?

In disobedience to God's command, they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had forbidden when he said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die."

- Genesis 2:17, Genesis 3:3

6. What induced them to commit this sin?

An evil spirit, called the serpent deceived them?

- Genesis 3:5,13

7. Who is this evil spirit?

He is called the Devil, and Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning and does not hold to the truth.

- Revelation 12:9, John 8:44

8. How did Satan beguile Eve?

He said, "You will not surely die - you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- Genesis 3:4-5

9. Why did they so readily believe?

They filled with a desire to become wise and like God.

- Genesis 3:6

II. The Results of the Fall

10. What were the results of Adam's disobedience?

Sin and death came into the world.

- Romans 5:12

11. What do we understand by this death, which came over Adam and his descendants?

The death of soul and body; the body must die and return to the ground, and man, prone to do evil, has become guilty of eternal condemnation.

- Genesis 3:19, Psalm 14:3, Romans 5:16

12. How did sin reveal itself in Adam's descendants?

All flesh had corrupted their way on the earth, so that the Lord had to destroy them from the earth.

- Genesis 6:12-13

13. Is there anyone on earth without sin?

No. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. No one is without sin, except the Son of God, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

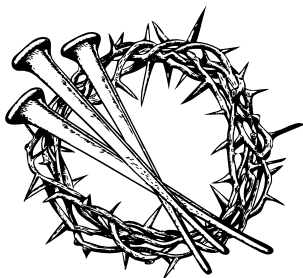
- John 3:6, Luke 1:35, Hebrews 7:26

14. What should this teach us?

From this we should learn that by nature we are prone to evil and are children of wrath; and realizing our sinful condition, we should seek forgiveness through the grace and mercy of God.

- Ephesians 2:2-3

PART 3



*The Redemption of
Man Through Christ*

CHAPTER 1: How Redemption was Promised by God

1. Did the Lord, God suffer man to die in sin and misery?

No. He redeemed his people.

- Luke 1:68, 1 Peter 1:3-4

2. How did he redeem them?

By giving his only begotten Son.

- John 3:16

3. How could God give His Son?

He had to partake of flesh and blood; that through death he might destroy him that had power of death, that is, the devil.

- Hebrews 2:14-15

4. Was there no other way to redeem us?

No. No one could by any means redeem his brother.

- Psalm 49:7, Revelation 5:3-4

5. Was only one, our Saviour, to die for all?

Yes. For as by one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

- Romans 5:19

I. The Promise to Adam and the Patriarchs Before the Giving of the Law

6. How could man know that a Redeemer was to come to atone for his sin?

God made this known to Adam, for he said to the serpent, "He (the seed of the woman, Christ) shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

- Genesis 3:15

7. Has this promise reference to Christ?

Yes. To Christ, the crucified one.

- Colossians 2:15, 1 John 3:8, Revelation 13:8

8. Did the faithful before the flood believe in this promise?

Yes. By faith Abel offered to God. So were Enoch and Noah of the faith.

- Hebrews 11:4-7

9. To whom did God make this promise more clearly?

To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when he said, "In you and in your offspring shall all families of the earth be blessed."

- Genesis 12:3, 26:4, 28:14, Galatians 3:16

II. The Law, a Schoolmaster unto Christ

10. By what means did God control the people of Israel before the advent of Christ?

He gave them the law of Moses, especially the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, written upon two tablets of stone.

- Exodus 20:1-17

11. What are the Ten Commandments?

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

- Exodus 20:1-2

First Table

I. You shall have no other gods before me.

II. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them, or serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, and showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me, and keep my commandments.

III. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Second Table

V. Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

VI. You shall not murder.

VII. You shall not commit adultery.

VIII. You shall not steal.

IX. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

X. You shall not covet your neighbour's house, you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's.

12. What is the sum and substance of these Ten Commandments?

The first table commands us to love God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind. And the second table is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself.

- Matthew 22:37-39, Romans 13:10

13. Has the law respect only to actions?

No. It has special respect to the inward movings or desires of the heart.

- 1 Timothy 1:5, Matthew 15:19

14. Does the law forbid secret lusts?

By all means. For it is written, "You shall not covet."

- Exodus 20:17, Romans 7:7, Colossians 3:5

15. Has anyone ever fully kept the law?

No. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.

- Romans 3:9-19, James 2:10

16. For what purpose was the law given?

The law was our guardian until Christ came and that man might have a knowledge of sin.

- Galatians 3:24, Romans 3:20

III. Predictions by the Prophets Concerning Christ

17. Did the prophets foretell the coming of Christ?

Yes. All the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days.

- Acts 3:24

18. What did Moses say of the Saviour?

He said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among you, from your brothers - it is to him you shall listen."

- Deuteronomy 18:15

19. Are there any predictions in the Psalms concerning Christ?

Yes. Not only the writings of Moses and the prophets, but also the Psalms prophesy concerning Christ.

- Luke 24:44

CHAPTER 2: The Appearance of Christ for our Redemption

1. When did the Saviour appear in the world?

When the time, which had been predicted was fully come, God sent his Son.

- Genesis 49:10, Luke 2:1, Galatians 4:4

2. How did he partake of flesh and blood?

He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary, and he was named Jesus.

- Matthew 1:18,25, Luke 1:35

3. Where was the Saviour born?

At Bethlehem, in Judea.

- Micah 5:2, Luke 2:4

4. Under what circumstances was he born?

Poor and despised, in a stable in Bethlehem.

- Luke 2:7

5. Where was he brought up?

In Nazareth.

- Luke 4:16, Matthew 2:23

I. The Baptism and Public Ministry of Christ

6. When was Jesus proclaimed as the Son of God?

At the age of thirty, when He was baptized of John. For a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

- Matthew 3:17, Luke 3:22

7. In what way did Jesus prove himself to be the Saviour of the world?

By his teaching and miraculous works, he taught as one having authority and not as the scribes, and he performed many miracles.

- Mark 1:22, John 11:47

8. What was the substance of his preaching?

Repent and believe the gospel.

- Mark 1:15

9. What miracles did Jesus perform?

He opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame walk, cleansed the lepers, unstopped the ears of the deaf; loosed the tongues of the dumb; he raised the dead, and did many other miracles.

- Luke 7:19-22

II. The Suffering and Death of Our Saviour

10. What did the Lord Jesus finally do for us?

He died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

- 1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 Peter 2:24

11. What is the real significance of the Lord's death?

It is an offering for the sins of the whole world by which he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

- Hebrews 10:12-14

12. When did his suffering begin?

In the night, in which he was betrayed by Judas, in the garden of Gethsemane, His soul became exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.

- Matthew 26:36-38

13. Why had he to suffer such agony?

The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- Isaiah 53:6-7

14. What followed his agony of soul?

He suffered himself to be taken, condemned and to be delivered over to death by the pagan judge Pontius Pilate.

- Matthew 26-27

15. What manner of death did the Saviour die?

He was crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem, between two murderers.

- John 19:17-18

16. Why was it necessary for the Saviour to die on the cross?

That he might redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. "For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree."

- Galatians 3:13

17. Was the Lord Jesus also buried?

Yes. They laid him in a new tomb, cut out in the rock.

- Matthew 27:60

III. Christ's Resurrection and Ascension

18. Did the Saviour remain in the tomb?

No. He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

- Luke 24:34, 1 Corinthians 15:4, Psalm 16:10, Matthew 12:40

19. What does his resurrection ensure us?

That we are justified through his blood; for he was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

-Romans 4:25

20. Where was the Lord Jesus after his resurrection?

He presented himself alive to his disciples for forty days speaking about the kingdom of God.

- Acts 1:3

21. What took place after the forty days?

Jesus led his disciples as far as Bethany on Mount Olivet, and there parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

- Luke 24:50-51, Acts 1:9-11

22. What did the Lord Jesus obtain for us by his ascension?

By his own blood he entered once for all into the holy places, thus securing an eternal redemption.

- Hebrews 9:12, 1 John 2:1

IV. The Redeemer's Threefold Office

23. In what way are we to regard the Lord Jesus after having accomplished our redemption?

As our prophet, high priest and king.

- Matthew 21:11, Hebrews 4:15, Luke 23:38

24. What is his prophetic office?

He revealed to us the way of salvation, prophecies coming events, and strengthened this with miracles; for such were the functions of the Old Testament prophet.

- Deuteronomy 18:15, Matthew 5:18-19, Matthew 20:18-19

25. What did the Saviour do as a high priest?

Christ, as our High Priest has offered himself up, once for all, a sacrifice; he intercedes for us continuously and blesses us as God's children.

- Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 9:26, John 17, Romans 8:34, Luke 24:50, Ephesians 1:3

26. What is Christ's office as King?

He gives commandments and subdues people to his power, he rules and defends them, he restrains and conquers his enemies, and protects and rewards his own.

- John 13:34, Jeremiah 23:5, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Matthew 25:34

27. What is the nature of Christ's kingdom?

His kingdom is not of this world. It is a spiritual kingdom of grace in his believers. He has a heavenly kingdom of glory, into which he will, finally lead his believers.

- John 18:36, Luke 1:33, Luke 17:21, 2 Timothy 4:18

V. The Sending of the Holy Spirit and Universal Grace

28. What gift did the Lord Jesus bestow upon his own, after his ascension?

He gave them the Holy Spirit, according to his promise.

- John 14:16

29. When did this occur?

On the day of the first Pentecost of the New Testament.

- Acts 2:1-4

30. Was the Holy Spirit given to the apostles only?

No. Peter said: "The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." God will give the Holy Spirit to those who will pray for it.

- Acts 2:39, Luke 11:13

31. What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believers?

He testifies of Jesus; he comforts and sanctifies them, leads them into all truth, and through him, the love of God is shed abroad into their hearts.

- John 15:26, John 16:7-14, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Romans 5:5

32. What did the Holy Spirit particularly enable the apostles to do?

He enabled them to preach the gospel to all people, and to strengthen their preaching with miracles.

- Acts 2:4, Luke 24:49, 1 Corinthians 12

33. Was God's message of salvation only for the people of Israel?

No. The Word of God was first to be spoken to the Jews; but afterwards to the Gentiles.

- Acts 13:46

34. Is it the will of God that all men should be saved?

Yes. God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

- 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9

35. Has redemption been provided for all?

Yes. Christ gave himself a ransom for all.

- 1 Timothy 2:6, Galatians 1:4

36. Do all accept this redemption?

No. Not all are obedient to the gospel.

- Romans 10:3, Romans 10:16, 2 Thessalonians 1:8

CHAPTER 3: Faith in Christ

1. What is the true way to salvation?

Faith in Jesus Christ, our Saviour and his shed blood.

- John 20:31, Matthew 16:16-17, Romans 3:25, John 1:12

2. Do we earn salvation by faith?

No. Faith embraces the finished work of Christ, whereby we obtain salvation and eternal life.

- 2 Corinthians 5:21, John 3:36, Ephesians 2:8-9

3. What is true faith?

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

- Hebrews 11:1

4. What does true faith imply?

Real repentance and change of mind; that we become convinced of our sinfulness and repent of it.

- Mark 1:15, Romans 7:24

5. What change is brought about in a believer's heart?

He is converted from the error of his way to Christ the Shepherd and bishop of our souls.

- James 5:20, 1 Peter 2:25, Luke 15:17-19

I. Regeneration and Good Works

6. What is this change of heart called in the New Testament?

It is called regeneration; a new creation.

- John 3:3, Galatians 6:15, Titus 3:5

7. Who brings about regeneration in us?

God himself brings about regeneration in us by his Word and Spirit, to the obedience of Christ.

- 1 Peter 1:3, James 1:18, John 3:5

8. Is it necessary, then to be born again to be a true Christian?

Yes. For without regeneration, no one can see the kingdom of God.

- John 3:3-5, 1 Corinthians 15:50

9. Does regeneration produce a godly life?

Yes. Whoever is born of God, does not make a practice of sinning.

- 1 John 3:9

10. Can we not, through our own strength avoid sin and do good?

No. For Christ says, "Without me, you can do nothing."

- John 15:5

11. Is holy living possible only through Christ and his grace?

Yes. For from God, Christ became to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

- 1 Corinthians 1:30

II. Justification

12. What is justification?

When the repentant sinner through faith is declared righteous in Christ.

- Romans 4:5, 2 Corinthians 5:21

13. Is a sinner justified by grace?

Yes. We are justified freely without any merit of our own, by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

- Romans 3:24

14. In what way does justification benefit us?

To have peace with God as his children, to have been freed from the bondage of sin, and to be aided in perfecting holiness.

- Romans 5:1, Romans 8:16, John 8:36

III. Sanctification

15. What is sanctification?

To be sanctified is to be freed from the dominion of sin and to persevere in well-doing.

- Romans 6:22, 2 Corinthians 7:1

16. Must a Christian become holy?

Yes. For as he who called you is holy, so must we be holy in all manner of living.

- 1 Peter 1:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 12:14

17. Who produces sanctification in us?

We are sanctified and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 4:25-32, Philippians 3:13-14

IV. The Church of God

18. What is the collective body of believers called?

The church of God

- 1 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:13

19. How does Christ regard his church?

As his body. He is the head of the body, the church.

- Colossians 1:18

20. Are all who profess to belong to the church of God true members of the body of Christ?

No. They only are true members, who by faith in Christ have become the children of God.

- Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 2:13

21. Are there to be teachers and ministers in the church?

Yes. The teachers are to preach the Word diligently and exhort; but the church is to hear and obey.

- 2 Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:5, Hebrews 13:17, Ephesians 4:11-12

V. Baptism

22. Did the Lord Jesus give a command concerning baptism?

Yes. He said to his disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

- Matthew 28:19

23. Is baptism necessary? *

Yes. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.

- Mark 16:16, Matthew 3:15

24. Who are to be baptized? *

All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are converted to him.

- Acts 2:28, Mark 16:16

25. What is the purpose of baptism? *

It serves as a sign of putting on Christ and of being united with the church.

- Galatians 3:26-27, 1 Corinthians 12:13

26. What does baptism teach us?

That we are buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

- Romans 6:4-5

VI. The Lord's Supper

27. Who instituted the Lord's supper?

The Lord Jesus himself in the night when he was betrayed.

- Matthew 26:26-28

28. With what did he institute it?

With bread and wine.

- 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

29. For what purpose was the Lord's supper instituted?

To commemorate the sufferings and death of Christ, to serve as a token of communion with Christ and of communion of believers with each other.

- Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:26, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

30. Is the Lord's supper to be commemorated often?

Yes. According to the example of the first Christians.

- Acts 2:41-42

31. Who is to commemorate it?

All baptized, repentant believers.

- Acts 2:41-42

32. What is demanded of them?

True examination. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

- 1 Corinthians 11:27-28

33. What are we to proclaim thereby?

We are thereby to proclaim the Lord's death till he comes.

- 1 Corinthians 11:26

34. What did the Lord Jesus do to his disciples after the supper?

He washed their feet and said, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just I have done to you."

- John 13:14-15

CHAPTER 4: The Life and Conduct of the Believers

1. What should be the believer's conduct in their daily walk and life?

As the redeemed of the Lord, they should serve God in holiness and righteousness, which is acceptable to him, and let their good works shine before men.

- Luke 1:74-75, Matthew 5:16, Ephesians 5:13

2. Did the Lord give us a command?

Yes. He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you."

- John 13:34, 1 John 3:14-18

3. Should we also love our enemies?

Yes. Christ said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."

- Matthew 5:44-45

I. Non-Resistance and Suffering

4. What ought we to do when we are injured by anyone?

We are not to repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling.

- 1 Peter 3:9, Romans 12:19

5. Should a true Christian suffer patiently?

Yes. For it is written, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his footsteps."

- 1 Peter 2:21, Matthew 10:22

6. How does the Lord Jesus comfort his followers in sufferings?

He says, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven."

- Matthew 5:11-12

II. Government and the Oath

7. How should we conduct ourselves toward the authorities?

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

- Romans 13:1

8. What does our Saviour say concerning the swearing of oaths?

He says, "Do not take an oath at all, . . . let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil."

- Matthew 5:34-37

9. Is this said of all oaths?

Yes. For James says, "But above all . . . do not swear either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath."

- James 5:12

10. What did Christ say of idle words?

"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak."

- Matthew 12:36

III. Domestic Life of the Christian

11. Who instituted marriage?

The Lord God himself, with Adam and Eve in paradise.

- Genesis 2:24

12. What persons may unite in marriage?

Those who are not too nearly related to each other and who are of the same faith.

- Leviticus 18-19, 1 Corinthians 7:39, 1 Corinthians 9:5

13. May married persons be divorced?

No. They should not be divorced. Christ said, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

- Matthew 19:3-9

14. How should married persons conduct themselves toward each other?

Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies, and wives should submit to their husbands as to the Lord.

- Ephesians 5:22-28

15. What are parents to do for their children?

They are to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

- Ephesians 6:4

16. How are children to behave toward their parents?

They are to obey their parents in all things. Honour their father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise.

- Colossians 3:20, Ephesians 6:1-2

17. What have male servants and female servants to observe toward their masters?

In everything, they are to obey their earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

- Colossians 3:22-24

18. How are masters to treat their subordinates?

Masters are to stop threatening, knowing that their Master also is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

- Ephesians 6:9

IV. Church Discipline

19. When a brother or a sister has been overtaken by sin, how are they to be dealt with?

They are to be admonished and restored in a spirit of gentleness.

- Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-17

20. But if the offender will not hear?

Then take one or two others along with you and admonish him a second time.

- Matthew 18:16

21. But if he neglects to hear them or lives in gross sin, what should be done with such a person?

He must be excommunicated from the church and we are to have nothing to do with him, so that he may be ashamed.

- Matthew 18:17, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14, 1 Corinthians 5:11

22. But if he repents of his sin?

Then it is sufficient, that he was punished by the many; so now, you ought rather to forgive him and comfort him.

- 2 Corinthians 2:6-7

V. Prayer

23. By what means do we obtain all things from God?

By prayer. Ask and it will be given to you.

- Matthew 7:7

24. Should we use many words in prayer?

No. We must not heap up empty phrases as the heathen do, for our Father knows what we need before we ask him.

- Matthew 6:7-8

25. How are we to call upon God, our Father?

In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

- John 14:13, Philippians 2:10, Romans 10:13

26. After what manner did Jesus teach us to pray?

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.)”

- Matthew 6: 9-13

27. Does God at all times hear our prayers? *

This is the confidence that we have in him; that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. (Still he sometimes delays to granting our petitions, in order to test our faith).

- 1 John 5:14, (Matthew 15:22-28)

28. Are we also to call upon the Lord Jesus?

Yes. They all may honour the Son, just as they honour the Father and call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- John 5:23, 1 Corinthians 1:2

29. How should we call upon the name of the Lord Jesus?

As the mediator between God and man, who gave himself a ransom for all.

- 1 Timothy 2:5-6

30. What should we bear in mind in prayer?

Thanksgiving. "In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

- Philippians 4:6, Ephesians 5:20

VI. Knowing and Doing

31. Is it necessary, that we should know to do good?

Yes, knowledge without love puffs up.

- 1 Corinthians 8:1

32. In what spirit should we receive all knowledge?

We should be humble and unassuming. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

- Galatians 6:3

33. What benefit do we derive from knowledge? *

It may teach us how one ought to behave in the household of God.

- 1 Timothy 3:15

34. Is mere knowledge then not enough?

No. We must also be doers of the Word.

- James 1:22

35. What is the duty of Christians in all they do, in word and deed?

“So whatever you wish that others do to you, do also to them.”

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

- Matthew 7:12, Colossians 3:17

36. What should we say when we have done all things?

“We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.”

- Luke 17:10

CHAPTER 5: Future Destiny of Man

1. What is the end of this natural life?

The end of life is death.

- Romans 6:21, Psalm 39:5, 1 Corinthians 15:26

2. Must all man die?

Yes. It is appointed for man to die once.

- Hebrews 9:27

3. Does the soul die with the body?

No. The soul is immortal, which no man is able to kill.

- Matthew 10:28

4. What becomes of the soul after death? *

This is shown in the story of the rich man and Lazarus. (The soul remains after death either in hell or heaven)

- Luke 16:19-26

5. Will there be any in the last day that will not die?

Yes. But they will be changed into the state of incorruption.

- 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

I. The Resurrection of the Dead

6. Will the dead rise again?

Yes. There will be a future resurrection of the just and unjust.

- Acts 24:15

7. When will the dead rise?

On the last day. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise incorruptibly.

- John 6:39, 1 Corinthians 15:52-53

8. Who will raise up the dead?

God will raise up the dead by Jesus Christ.

- 2 Corinthians 4:14

II. Judgement

9. What will follow the raising of the dead?

There will be a day, in which God will judge the world in righteousness. Then we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ.

- Acts 17:31, 2 Corinthians 5:10

10. Who will then be the judge?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For the Father judges no one but has given all judgement to the Son.

- John 5:22-27

11. How will this take place?

When the Son of Man comes in all His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him will all the nations be gathered; and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: and He will set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left.

- Matthew 25:31-33

12. Will there be respect of persons?

With Him there is no respect of persons; for He will render to everyone according to their deeds.

- Romans 2:6, 11

13. Will men be judged only according to their works?

“On the day of judgment, people will give account of every careless word they speak.”

- Matthew 12:36

14. Will the hidden thoughts be judged too?

The Lord will bring to light things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.”

- 1 Corinthians 4:5, Romans 2:16

15. In what manner will sentence be pronounced?

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” “Then He will say to those on the left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

- Matthew 25:34, 41

III. Rewards and Punishments

16. What will the final reward of the faithful be?

They will enter eternal life, free from all sin. “Therefore, they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence. They will hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their Shepherd and He will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

- Revelation 7:15-17

17. What will be the fate of the ungodly?

They will be punished with everlasting banishment from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

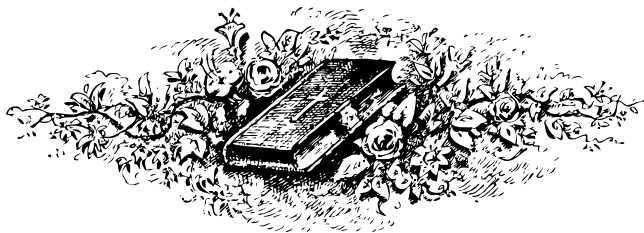
- 2 Thessalonians 1:9

18. What lesson have we in conclusion to learn from all this?

We should learn from all this that heaven and earth will pass away, in a time and hour unknown to man; and that the Lord will then appear in judgement to give to everyone according to their works. Therefore, we should always watch and be ready, lest the day of judgement come upon us unawares, and always be ready to meet the Lord with joy and to remain with Him to all eternity. Amen.

- Matthew 24:35-36, 42, 44

ARTICLES



of Faith

ARTICLE 1: Of God, the Creator of All Things

We believe in our hearts and confess it with our mouth, in company with all the great patriarchs and prophets and chosen children of God, who have lived from the beginning, inspired by the Holy Spirit, in an everlasting, almighty, and incomprehensible God, one who has created heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible (Genesis 1).

And He still sustains, governs and supports with His mighty word all things. He is holy, entirely complete, a mysterious spiritual being, as our Saviour Himself testifies in John 4:24, "God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

He proceeds from Himself and does not need help from anyone. Nor is He served by human's hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything (Acts 17:25).

He is everlasting, without beginning or end, an eternal and almighty God, Lord of the heavenly hosts; a King of kings, who is over all, and through all, and in all (Ephesians 4:6).

A righteous judge (2 Timothy 4:8), a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29), a jealous God who will visit the iniquities of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of them who hate Him (Exodus 20:5).

He is honest and just. He is holy and merciful, a God of love and compassion. He is a God who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see (1 Timothy 6:16).

The heaven is His throne and the earth His footstool (Isaiah 66:1). He is present everywhere, He sees all things and no one can hide from His presence, so that God will not see him (Proverbs 15:3). No creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:13). Of such an ever-present God we speak.

It is written in Isaiah 42:8, "I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols." He is God alone, and no one else. Everything must be obedient to His holy will. For His word is true, and His commands are righteous. For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm (Psalm 33:9).

In the Lord we have righteousness and strength. To Him every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear allegiance (Isaiah 45:23).

To this great Lord and God we must cling with a living and everlasting faith, and be obedient to Him. For if we want to learn to call our God “Abba (daddy), dear Father”, then we owe it to Him to show Him childlike obedience, and to love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Matthew 22:37).

ARTICLE 2: Of Son of God

We also believe in and confess Jesus Christ, the true Son of the everlasting God, who is called the Word, which has been with God from eternity, the light and glory of His Father (Hebrews 1).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made (John 1:1-3).

And the epistle to the Hebrews testifies in chapter 1; “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but these last days he has spoken to

us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. Colossians 1:16 states; "For by Him all things were created, in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him.

David states in Psalm 33:6; "By the Word of the Lord the heavens made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. And the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 3:9 that God has created all things by Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we also together with Thomas, confess Him as our Lord and God (John 20:28) and with Peter and Nathaneal that He is the Christ, the living Son of God, who is the image of the invisible God and the first-born of every creature (Colossians 1:15). In Acts 4:12 we read; "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Yes, we confess that he is the true God and the eternal life, our own Lord, Savior, Redeemer, and our salvation.

ARTICLE 3: Of God, the Holy Spirit

We also believe in and confess the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26). Of this Spirit David said as in Psalm 33:6; “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.” He is the only consolation of the afflicted, the power of God from on high (Luke 24).

This Holy Spirit leads us in all truth, and all who are moved by the Spirit of God, are children of God (Romans 8:16). Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him (Romans 8:9). Through this Spirit we examine all things, even the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:10). And He who searches the hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit. But God has revealed to us by the Spirit that we are the children of God.

In 2 Peter 1:21 we read, “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit also moved the apostles of the Lord to speak in many tongues of the mighty works of God, and to praise and to glorify His name before all people (Acts 2). In Isaiah 11:2, the Holy Spirit is called the

Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And through Him be praise to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from now into all eternity. Amen.

ARTICLE 4: Of the Holy Trinity

We believe and confess that God the Father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit are one almighty God (1 John 5:7). For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. And these three are one; not only one or united, but wholly one in action and in will, as well as in accomplishments, in like honor and glory, one, not without the other, equally eternal, not three persons or gods, but only one God, the only one and none other.

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (Romans 11:33). Yet vast, is this godly and blessed mystery (1 Timothy 3:16), much of which remains beyond our grasp, and God’s ways beyond our understanding, yet they are believable. And in Colossians 1:27, Paul says, “To them God chose

to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Jesus Himself teaches us that this triune God is inseparable. For when Philip asked the Lord, “Show us the Father, and it is enough for us”, Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” (John 14:9).

In John 12:44-45 Jesus says, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me”. In John 10:30 our blessed Savior says, “I and the Father are one”. He does not say united, but one and when the Apostle Paul wants to bless his faithful followers, he pronounces his blessing in the name of the triune God and says, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

ARTICLE 5: Of the Birth of Jesus Christ

We believe and confess, as the whole Scriptures testify, that He, Jesus Christ, from eternity, born of God and has always been

with God. But when the time which God had set for the salvation of the world was fulfilled, He sent His Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary. “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

And when the angel speaks to Mary, she was surprised how this was to happen, for she was a virgin. And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

This is why the Apostle Paul is filled with wonder when he says, “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness” (1 Timothy 3:16). God was manifest in the flesh, Jesus Christ became man. “He emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7).

God has also exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9). Hebrews 4 says He is sinless and spotless. He was not created like Adam, but is the Lord from heaven (1 Corinthians 15).

He proceeded from the Father and came into the world. Then He departed this world and proceeded to the Father (John 6). And all this He did for our sake, because otherwise we would have remained in God's anger and disgrace into which we all, with Adam, have fallen.

Therefore we believe and confess the birth of Christ as man and His great humiliation. But at the same time He did not relinquish His heavenly majesty and individuality, for in Him abides the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2). He remains true God and man in one person and has saved us all through his suffering and death, and restored what we lost through Adam.

For God created man to everlasting life in righteousness and holiness, but through sin death has conquered all men, because all have sinned (Romans 5:12). But God's everlasting love had pity for all and promised them that the seed of woman shall bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:14-15).

Yes, God's holy love had compassion; man being God's glorious image should not be lost. This is why the Lord Jesus came to earth and became man so He could help man again and make him blessed, for Christ's whole life and

conduct on earth was one of pure love where with He loved us all.

For with His blessed childhood, when He was born on earth as a child, He carried our childhood, so that our children, in their innocence, through His holy innocence, may become blessed children of God. He also was burdened by our sins and weaknesses through His holy life.

And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Romans 4:25). Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

In conclusion to this article we say, "Thanks be to our Lord Jesus for His suffering and death when He died for our sake. For He has purchased us with His precious blood so that we can inherit His heavenly kingdom. To Him

and His heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit,
be eternal thanks for His great love. Amen.

ARTICLE 6: Of the Church of God

We confess too, that God has had, from the beginning and always will have a visible church, or a people whom He loves. This church He began with began with Adam and Eve in Paradise. Afterwards, He kept as His church the pious patriarchs and ancestors with their houses and families.

With Noah, He renewed His promise and with Abraham He made a covenant (Genesis 17:4). He and his seed should become the chosen people and His possession. This was the church of the Old Testament, the seed of Abraham, the generation of Isaac, and the offsprings of Jacob or the Jews under the law.

When, however, in the fullness of time our Lord Jesus came with His gospel of mercy and grace, He sent His apostles into the whole world. By the preaching of the gospel and through it they were to gather a church of all people and tongues who would become converted and believe in Jesus Christ.

Yes, these together were to have one Lord, one faith and one baptism (Ephesians 4:5) Those who are united in one faith, and are baptized into one body through Christ with God in heaven, and who have Christ dwelling in their hearts (Ephesians 3:17). In this way the fellowship of the church was one body, who together, without respect of person, are one body and one soul through Jesus Christ who support and keep each other in love and in prayer before God; that in the church, which according to Acts 2, God has chosen for Himself of every tongue and nation, a people that fear God and live righteously.

That is why the Apostle Paul says the Lord has gathered a church for Himself by His own blood and has cleansed it with the washing of water with the Word, that this church reflects one that is glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and, without blemish (Ephesians 5:26- 27).

This church will then be called the house and temple of the living God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). It is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which Christ is the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20).

This church is also recognized by its faith in the Scriptures, which is a faith working

through love (Galatians 5:6). It is founded on the pure teachings of Scripture and on the godly and just conduct the members have with each other and in the keeping of the commandments of God as has been taught by Jesus, the head of the church.

In conclusion, by faith we believe that the Lord Jesus, according to His promise, will be, and remain with His church and all believing Christians to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). That no power or force of Satan, neither the gates of hell shall prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). May we come to the true knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ and in real fellowship with God. This we most truly and sincerely wish for all of us unworthy ones from the depth of our heart. Amen.

ARTICLE 7: Of the Choice of Teachers and Servants

We believe and also confess that the Lord Jesus has ordered and set as shepherds, elders, teachers and deacons who govern the church of God, and who lead with an exemplary teaching and conduct. These must, then be called by an orderly election or choice. following the example to of Holy

Scriptures. In Matthew 10 we read that our Lord chose twelve of his followers as apostles and sent them out to preach the gospel.

In the book of Acts 1, the apostles chose two to replace the betrayer Judas and elected Matthias by lot. That conducting this election was very necessary and important, and that no church can carry on without orderly elections, we can plainly see from Paul's letter to Timothy, "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:1-2). And to Titus he writes, "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you (Titus 1:5).

As to how an elder's disposition and behavior is to be in the church, Paul says, "That he be above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good,

self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:6-9).

Of the servants in the church Paul writes, “Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued,[c] not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Timothy 3:8-9).

From this we see that the church cannot exist without shepherds and teachers. For Solomon says in his Proverbs (29:18), “Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint”. In order that such selection or choice be made according to the will of God, and to serve the best welfare of the church, the church must prepare itself for this task with godly fasting and prayer, and call earnestly to God that He, as one who knows the hearts of men, make known the one He has chosen and prepared, in the sincere trust that the Lord through His Holy Spirit will give His assistance in this matter.

ARTICLE 8: Of Holy Baptism

We believe and confess also that our lord Jesus, in order to maintain the church, instituted baptism with water upon the confession of faith. For this we read in Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16, that the Lord sent His apostles out into the world with this command; "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." And the Lord gives them this consolation; "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned".

This command the apostles faithfully carried out, for we read in Acts 2, when the apostles, after the ascension of Christ gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit was poured out over them, that Peter proclaimed to the people the faith in Jesus Christ, of his suffering, death and resurrection.

By reference to the Scripture and the Psalms, He powerfully proved to them that Jesus was the promised Saviour, Messiah, and Redeemer. We are told that this message pierced their hearts and they spoke to Peter and the other

apostles saying; "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself." And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:37-39).

Then they that gladly received his words were baptized and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls. who continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking, of bread and in prayer.

Much could be added here, how the apostles baptized those that believed, which God-fearing hearts can read in the Holy Scripture of Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18:8), of Cornelius, the captain (Acts 10), and of the eunuch under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians (Acts 8) and many other places. All of these received baptism in no other way but only upon confession of their faith.

Dear friends in Christ, from all this we can see, that the Lord Jesus has commanded to teach and to baptize, and secondly, that the apostles baptized no one who did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, or who did not desire to be baptized.

Thirdly, that whoever wants to become a follower of Jesus Christ and who wants to confess and accept Him as Lord, Savior and Redeemer, and who wants to become a partaker of His body, must be baptized, and must not consider himself wiser or superior to the Lord Jesus. who permitted Himself to be baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13). The Lord Jesus says in John 8:31, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples." "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much" (Luke 16:10).

Should someone think or ask; "What is baptism, or what does it mean, and why is it necessary?" To this we answer; "Baptism indicates to us the washing away of sins through the merits of the blood of Christ. For as water serves to cleanse the body, so the blood of Jesus Christ takes away all sins of all

sinner who faithfully and penitently receive baptism, and it purifies our conscience of dead deeds, to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14).

Truly, the apostle says in 1 Peter 3:21; "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ". All this happens not with the natural power of water or the soiled flesh, but through the covenant of a clean conscience with God.

Secondly, this penitent soul will be accepted and received in the church and fellowship of Christ. For Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13; "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" and this body is the church of Christ. Thirdly, we accept Christ in faith and through His suffering and death become partakers of His inheritance.

The apostle Paul says in Galatians 3:27; "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." These have put on Christ through baptism, and have become regenerated inwardly. No more do they permit sin to govern in this worldly life and are obedient in their desires as stated in

Romans 6; who for the love of Jesus, regarded everything for harm and filth in order to apply all powers of the soul in their love towards Jesus so that they may truly become holy in heart and soul (1 Peter 3).

Dearest souls! These then have been baptized into Christ's death and were buried with Him through baptism, in order that as Jesus rose from the dead, through the glory of his Father, they too shall follow in the newness of life according to Romans 6.

We conclude this article on Holy Baptism and wish and hope that the almighty God will prosper all those who are contemplating this important step and will find them worthy and qualified in their hearts, so that they reach the decision to accept baptism with a continued and living faith and true knowledge in order that God in Christ will find them worthy, and with the Holy Spirit be inwardly baptized with fire. That God's blessing will be of this nature, we wish and pray from the depth of the heart.

ARTICLE 9: Of the Lord's Supper

We also believe and confess that our Lord Jesus has instituted a communion of bread and wine for all His faithful followers in remembrance of His innocent and most worthy suffering and death when He shed His blood for us sinful men. Out of true love He gave Himself to be crucified on the cross and willingly suffered death like a lamb that carried the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Through whom we have redemption by His blood, namely the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14). This holy communion our Lord Jesus did not only institute and order His apostles to maintain it, but He Himself did celebrate it in the night when He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot.

Then He said to His disciples: "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). And He took the bread and gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them saying; "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Likewise, He also took the cup, after supper, saying; "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27-28).

Likewise, Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, that in the night when Jesus was betrayed, He took the bread and thanked His heavenly Father, broke it, and divided it among His disciples. In the same manner He took the cup and gave it to them. He concluded his words to them in this way; "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

What is truly signified by this breaking of the bread and the drinking from the cup, is this; just as bread and wine serve for the nourishment of the body, in the same way our souls are nourished by the body and blood of Christ. Through and by this eating and drinking our souls are nourished and preserved to eternal life.

Therefore, dear souls, we must put no trust in the outward signs or things, but must much more place our whole faith in the true substances. For outwardly we eat and drink with the mouth nothing more than the natural bread and wine, but inwardly, in the soul, we receive through faith the true body and blood of Christ.

ARTICLE 10: Of the Washing of Feet

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, according to John 13, after He had instituted the Lord's Supper, laid aside His garments, took a towel and tied it around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him.

When He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments and resumed His place, He said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Blessed are you if you do them.

From this we should observe how Jesus, our Master, out of pure love humbled Himself, and took upon Him the role of a servant, in order to deliver and redeem us from sin and to cleanse us. And therefore He taught us that we, His followers, should also serve one another with equal humility and love.

ARTICLE 11: Of Marriage

We also confess a marriage, ordained by God Himself when He set Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden, namely two persons, a man and a woman, on whom God the Lord pronounced his blessing (Genesis 1:28).

But the men of old disregarded and misused this ordinance and took to themselves many wives. Therefore the Lord Jesus in the New Testament completely and totally renounced this practice and said that God at the beginning had created one man and one woman and had united them (Matthew 19).

Such a marriage in the Christian church must take place between two believing persons, who through one baptism were baptized into one body and were born anew, from above by God. These alone marry in the Lord according to 1 Corinthians 7:39. They can then become blessed in this union if they remain in the true faith, in love, in sacredness and in discipline, as taught in 1 Timothy 2:15.

Moses, the law giver of the Israelites, permitted the obstinate Jews to divorce themselves from their wives and gave them a letter of separation as stated in Deuteronomy 24.

This marriage separation or permission to divorce, the Lord Jesus completely annulled, and again reinstated marriage as it was in the beginning when God united two faithful people and made them as one flesh and placed them into paradise. "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6).

Therefore, it is plain that the two cannot be separated by divorce as long as they shall live. But if one of the persons dies, the other is at liberty to be married again to whom he will, but only in the Lord according to 1 Corinthians 7:39.

We understand this to mean that the living or remaining partner must remain in the true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the marriage must be in, not out of the church, for we consider it inadmissible when a person is married outside the church, as we have an example of this in the ancient world when God showed His displeasure as stated in Genesis 6.

Usually only quarrels and disagreements result between such marriage partners and this is not pleasing to God but is an abomination to Him. Paul teaches us; "Do not be unequally

yoked with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14). Let us therefore all be warned, and in a most brotherly fashion be admonished to beware of such marriages. May the good Lord, through his spirit preserve and keep us, that no one fall victim to such foolishness, and to depart from the Lord and His church for anything in this world, for our Lord Jesus teaches; “He that loves someone more than me, is not worthy of me (Matthew 10:37-38).

ARTICLE 12: Of the Evangelical Bann, its Withdrawal and its Application

Of the evangelical harm. its withdrawal and application of the punished ones in the church, we believe and confess that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to His church the keys of heaven, to bind and to set free and commanded that all annoying or vexing and disobedient members of the church should be banned from his body and the church as the Apostle Paul instructed the church at Corinth, “Purge the evil person from among you.” (1 Corinthians 5:13)

But how carefully we must proceed toward improvement rather than division, the Lord Jesus teaches us in Matthew 18:15-17 when He

says; "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

In order that we proceed very carefully with the bann and the separation from the church, our first elder, Menno Simon with all his co-workers teach and instruct the work in the house of the Lord, when he speaks in this way: The bann should be taught and applied in the proper apostolic way and practice; not too hastily and not too slowly, not too severely, neither too leniently, in order that you do not boil a young goat in its mother's milk (Exodus 23:19).

When, however, a man's iniquities have separated him from God and his sins have hid his face from you (Isaiah 59:2), and faces the wrath of God and has ruined his blessed state with God the Father, annoys the church of God and afflicts it, the Lord Jesus in Matthew 15:13 orders such plants which my heavenly Father

has not planted will be rooted up. This separation from the church was used and supported by the apostles and the first Christians as we can see in 1 Corinthians 5:5 and in 1 Timothy 1:20. In order to improve those who have become separated from the church, they must be kept apart and shunned. In this way they will be ashamed of their evil deeds, will repent, and their souls will be saved on the day of judgment according to 1 Corinthians 5.

Therefore is this separation from the church not for the destruction or ruin of the banned, but rather for penance and conversion of the disgraced and crushed hearts. We must therefore regard them not as our enemies, but as brothers, and must admonish them according to the teachings in 2 Thessalonians 3:15.

Above all, we must pray for them that the Lord Jesus will be gracious to them and will forgive them their sins. and through His compassionate love will accept them again as children and joint heirs of His kingdom. For the Lord has not given us power of authority for destruction but for improvement.

“For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends” (2 Corinthians 10:18).

Therefore the Lord Jesus teaches in Matthew 18:12-14; “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

In the same manner the church must extend once more a loving hand to the punished one after he has become truly penitent, and again accept him as a member of the church. It is sufficient, says the apostle, that he was punished by the many, therefore he must also receive a greater measure of assuring and comforting words and forgiveness in order that he does not sink in too much grief and sorrow.

And so I admonish you, that you show your love to these as stated in 2 Corinthians 2:8; “So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.”

ARTICLE 13: Of Government and Authority

We believe and confess that no government is without God's ordinance and that the government in power was ordained by God, so that he who opposes or resists the government also opposes and resists God's ordinance, and will be punished (Romans 13).

Therefore we must be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good (1 Peter 2:14).

And since the government is the servant of God, which does not carry the sword in vain, it serves as an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer (Romans 13:4).

The faithful ones too must fear punishment so that no one among us will suffer as a murderer, a thief, or as one who interferes in a strange office. We must also faithfully pay taxes, duties and other due payments, and give willingly, not only because of punishment but because of conscience's sake.

In all this we should follow the example of our Saviour who requested that the piece of money be paid for Him (Matthew 17:27). But in matters opposing God's will, we ought to obey God rather than men as stated in Acts 5:29. It is our duty too, to seek and to do what is best for our city and nation in which we dwell, and pray to God diligently that He will bless, keep, and protect the nation in which we live; "For in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jeremiah 29:7).

ARTICLE 14: On Taking Oaths

We believe and confess that a Christian, who has been born again of water and the Spirit, must at all times live a life of truthfulness, and therefore their thoughts, actions, and deeds toward God and all people should be truthful and just.

Because of this there is no need to take or swear any kind of oath, but rather they should conduct themselves in such a way, that when they says yes. it must be yes, and when they says no, it must be no. For whoever expresses themselves with grave words or language, reveals plainly that they have departed from true humility and have become doubtful that their words, yes, and no, can not be believed.

Our Lord Jesus forbade and prohibited the Christians in the New Testament from swearing any kind of oath as we see in Matthew 5:33-37. Make no oath at all, but let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil, says our Savior. And all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur (Revelation 21:8).

Therefore our yes and no, must at all times be yes, and no, otherwise God, who judges our heart, will punish severely and in the same way as if others have sworn falsely.

We conclude this article and hope that all devout children of God will obey God more than men in this matter.

ARTICLE 15: Of Revenge and Enmity and of Defencelessness

We believe and confess that Christians, as those who have died to the world and were born again of God, should never exercise revenge in this world, according to the instruction of Jesus Christ their Master as He Himself says in Matthew 5:38-44.

And Paul writes to the Romans in chapter 12:19-21; “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Therefore faithful children of God who want to become heirs of their Lord and Master, must make every effort to follow Him in love, having unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing (1 Peter 3:8-9).

From all this we see that every kind of revenge is prohibited according to the pure teaching of our Lord Jesus in the New Testament. The Spirit of the Gospel is a Spirit of peace and we are forbidden to use the sword or any other weapon against our enemies. “For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

Because of this we most avoid and shun the weapons of war, even if it means we have to suffer trouble and need for the Lord's sake, or we have to flee from one city or land to another and endure the confiscation of all our property, still we do no harm to another.

And we continue to follow with a humble heart, in word and deed, the path of the cross and patience, so that our faith may not be found to be hypocritical by God.

ARTICLE 16: Of Man's Freedom of Will

We believe and confess that man possesses a free will to choose for himself as he wills, between good and evil, death or life. We read in Deuteronomy 30:15; "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil", and in chapter 11:26; "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse."

We read too, in Jeremiah 21:8; "And to this people you shall say: 'Thus says the Lord: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.'"

So we see in the passages stated above from Holy Scriptures, that God proposed for man life or death and man has the capability to choose, to accept that which is good, or to reject it. This we also see of our first parents in paradise, who were created by God so that they could love their creator, fear him, and keep his commandments, or they had the freedom to leave God and to trespass these commandments, which they did according to Genesis 3.

By this free will that man was given and could have feared God, God will also judge the world; this righteous judgment will be given on the day of the Lord. But this free will to do good we have not from and by ourselves, but through God's mercy, that we can choose the good, believe the gospel, and become converted from the darkness to his marvellous light and to renounce the life of wickedness.

Instead be disciplined, righteous and holy in all things as we read in Titus 2:12; "training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,"

For we confess we have nothing from ourselves, but through the grace of God,

we are made able to do something good, therefore, we must give to God alone all honor and thank Him for His bountiful and inexpressible grace, for the goodness He has worked in us.

ARTICLE 17: Of the Resurrection of the Dead

We believe and confess also a resurrection of the dead; 'As it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment' (Hebrews 9:27).

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable (1 Corinthians 15:50). But this our flesh must first, like a kernel of wheat, be planted into the earth according to the scriptures.

Of this resurrection of the dead, of both the godly and the ungodly, the just and the unjust, the Lord Jesus says in John 5:28, 29: 'For an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.' 'And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Daniel 12:2).

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 'For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.'

With the hope for this resurrection the devout Job comforted and consoled himself in his suffering when he says in Job 19:25; 'For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.'

We know, Paul says, 'He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence' (2 Corinthians 4:14). In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, Paul says; 'But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.'

And he adds in conclusion, verse 18; 'Therefore encourage one another with these words.'

ARTICLE 18: Of the Last Judgment as a Reward for the Just and as a Punishment of the Unjust

We believe and confess a day of judgment, a reward for the just and a punishment for the unjust. The time and hour this day will come no angel knows, much less a mortal man, for the Father has preserved this alone in His power.

In the same way as in Noah's day they ate, they drank, they married and permitted themselves to be married, until the day when Noah entered the ark, so also will be the future of the Son of Man.

"For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:27). For the Lord will come unexpectedly; "For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:35). And on that day judgment will be made over all mankind.

Of this Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied and said; "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly

way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).

The prophet Daniel was shown this judgment in a vision as he himself testifies in the seventh chapter, verses 9-10, when he says: “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.”

John also speaks of this in Revelation 20:11-12; “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.”

On that great day he will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether

good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Then that which is hidden in darkness, will be brought to light, and He will disclose the purposes of the heart (1 Corinthians 4:5). We also read in Matthew 12:36, "people will give account for every careless word they speak." "So then each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

For this judgment is a judgment for all people, that have lived from the beginning. And here no excuses will help before the all-seeing God, for we know that He is God because this has been revealed to all men. There the sinner will see and discover, but too late, that he did not follow the true light, Jesus Christ.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave

me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?'

Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these

will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”” (Matthew 25:31-46).

May the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through grace, bring us all to this everlasting kingdom. Amen.

Closing Text

Revelation 14:13; “And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

Revelation 2:7; “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”



Be transformed

by the renewal of your mind.

Romans 12:2