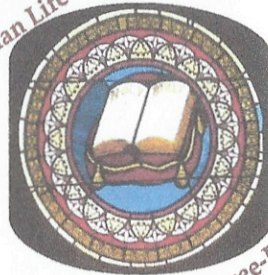




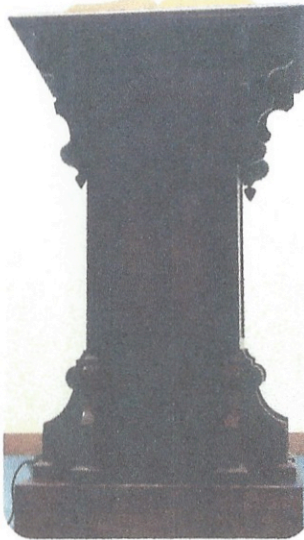
*How To Live A Christian Life*



*Three-Fold Communion Service*

# FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND

*The Bible*



*Baptism*

*Statement Of Faith*



*The Christian Home*

By J. PAUL RENO

# **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

*An outline of the Doctrines and Church Ordinances set forth in the Scriptures; Believed and Practiced by the*

## **BIBLE BRETHREN CHURCH**

*Hagerstown, Maryland*

*and by those individuals, missions and churches associated together with her for the propagation of the Gospel.*

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# FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND

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# FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND

## Introduction

**B**ecause of the obvious need to set forth our beliefs, especially for those who are unfamiliar with The Brethren Church(es), we have felt the leading of the Holy Spirit to put together this short booklet to outline where we stand.

In that the Bible is our final authority, we urge the reader to study it for a fuller scope of teaching in these areas. This booklet has been prepared to be used **with the Bible** – thus there are no quotations contained herein, only references for you to check.

We have quoted liberally from the booklet “We Believe” by L. L. Grubb, courtesy of the Brethren Missionary Herald Co., Winona Lake, Indiana – publishers for the National Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. While our churches are separate from each other, Dr. Grubb’s clear writing



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was of such a help to the author in his early ministry that he counts it a privilege to be able to freely use the same to help others.

May God bless these efforts to lead some to a better understanding of the Scriptures, a clearer view of Christ's Church, and a fuller knowledge of our Saviour.

J. Paul Reno

# **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

## **Chapter One**

### **How to become a Christian**

#### **1. REALIZE YOUR NEED OF A SAVIOUR (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 53:6)**

This basic truth of the universal condemnation by an all-holy God upon all men outside of Christ, individually and collectively, must be accepted before salvation can be obtained.

#### **2. REALIZE THE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (Rom. 6:23a; Matt. 25:41, 46; Luke 16:19-31)**

To be lost means eternal punishment in a place burning with fire, called Hell. Our sins have offended our Creator-God. Our acts of rebellion against the laws of God have shown our corrupted hearts and our association with the forces and future of Satan.

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### **3. REALIZE THAT GOD DEMANDS REPENTANCE (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3, 5; Luke 24:47; Acts 20:21)**

Only as we become sorry over the committing of our sins do we come to a place of Biblical repentance. Then we must, with God's help, turn in action, attitude, desire, goal, and motive from our sin towards God. Jesus came to save His people from their sin, – not to allow them to continue on in sin.

### **4. REALIZE THAT YOU CANNOT SAVE YOURSELF (Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:8, 9)**

No work, nor group of works, which you could produce could ever possibly be even helpful to the saving of your soul. Salvation from start to finish is all “**of the Lord**”. Even repentance and faith are gifts God gives to the lost sinner, that he might be saved.

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### **5. REALIZE THAT GOD HAS PROVIDED A WAY OF SALVATION (John 3:16; John 14:6; Acts 4:12)**

Before the foundation of the world the Father decreed that Jesus Christ should be the all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of men. Only in Jesus is there a way for man to be made right with God.

### **6. REALIZE WHO JESUS IS (I John 5:7; I Tim. 3:16; Isa. 7:14; I Tim. 2:5; Phil. 2:5-11)**

Jesus is God, the second member of the Divine Trinity. He has always existed as God but at a point in time He also became a man by process of the incarnation. He was born of a virgin, and became the only mediator between God and man. He was exalted by God and is worthy of worship as Lord over all creation.

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### **7. REALIZE WHAT JESUS DID AND DOES**

**(II Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:14; I Cor. 15:3, 4; Rom. 8:34; John 21:25)**

Jesus lived a pure and sinless life, taught many truths, gave many commandments, did much good, died on the Cross for our sins, shed His blood for our cleansing, was buried, and rose bodily from the dead on the third day. He later ascended into Heaven where He intercedes for His people until He returns to gather them home. These are only a few of the highlights of what Jesus did and does.

### **8. REALIZE THAT GOD IN HIS GRACIOUS LOVE REVEALS JESUS PERSONALLY TO THE SINNER (Gal. 1:15, 16; John 15:26; John 5:39; John 6:44)**

God the Father, through the working of God the Holy Spirit, used the Scriptures to reveal Jesus in a real, personal, and intimate way.

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Spiritually Jesus becomes as real as other humans seem physically. This is necessary for the sinner to be able to believe and receive Jesus in a proper Biblical fashion.

**9. REALIZE THAT YOU MUST FULLY BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (Acts 16:31; Acts 8:37; Acts 26:27-29; Rom. 10:9, 10)**

Hearty, sincere belief with the whole being is essential to being saved. Almost will not satisfy. With Jesus, it is all or nothing.

**10. REALIZE THAT YOU MUST RECEIVE JESUS AS LORD AND SAVIOUR IN ORDER TO BE SAVED AND IN ORDER FOR GOD TO BIRTH YOU INTO HIS FAMILY (John 1:11-13; Rom. 10:13; Isa. 33:22; Eph. 5:22-32)**

Receiving Jesus involves receiving Him without reservation for all that He is and wants to be. He is both Lord and Saviour and will not be divided. He becomes our spiritual

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husband, and thus the King, Lawgiver, and Judge of our lives. He thus not only saves us from our sins but also from ourselves.

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## **Chapter Two**

### **How to Live a Christian Life**

- 1. REALIZE THAT SINCE YOU HAVE BECOME A CHILD OF GOD THERE ARE TWO NATURES WITHIN YOU – ONE DEPRAVED, THE OTHER RIGHTEOUS (Rom. 7:15-25)**

The conflict of the two natures within Paul is a perfect picture of what happens within all true Christians. These natures continue to exist in the same being until the believer meets his Lord and is glorified (I Cor. 15:25, 53).

- 2. REALIZE THAT GOD HAS PROVIDED POWER FOR VICTORY HERE AND NOW (I Cor. 10:13; I John 5:4)**

This power is available under any and all circumstances.



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- 3. REALIZE THAT GOD EXPECTS YOU TO DEDICATE YOUR BODY, TIME, TALENTS, LIFE, AND MATERIAL THINGS TO HIM (Rom. 12:1, 2; I Cor. 6:19-20)**

This is entirely fair and reasonable in view of the fact that He has purchased you with the price of His own blood.

- 4. REALIZE THAT GOD PRESERVES YOU DAY BY DAY (John 10:27-30; John 5:24).**

Your life and destiny are perfectly safe in the clasped hands of Father and Son.

- 5. REALIZE THAT YOU MUST DAILY PRAY AND FEED UPON THE WORD (Mark 11:24; I Thess. 5:17; I Pet. 2:2; Jer. 15:16)**

This time of personal devotions is essential to spiritual health. You need daily food and fellowship with the Father. You should seek to develop a ministry of prayer as the foundation for any Christian service God should want you to perform.

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

### **6. REALIZE THAT YOU MUST SEEK CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:15-16)**

God's people belong to one great family. You should seek the fellowship of the members of your family, not Satan's family (John 8:44).

### **7. REALIZE THE VITAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS (James 2:17-26)**

God expects the believer to perform good works before Him and men, not as a way of earning salvation but as the evidence and fruit of salvation. A lack of good works in the Christian life belies the sincerity of the profession.

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

- 8. REALIZE THAT YOU MUST SEEK TO WIN THE LOST TO CHRIST (Dan. 12:3; Mark 8:36, 37; Acts 1:8)**

Every believer should seek to evangelize the souls of his family, friends, and community. We should also seek to pray for and support faithful missionaries through our local church.

- 9. REALIZE THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER A PART OF THIS WORLD'S SYSTEM (I John 5:4, 5; I John 2:15-17; 3:1; 4:4-6; 5:19)**

While we live in this world, we definitely are not a part of it. We are to live holy and separated lives to God's glory and in victory over the standards, motives, and sins of those who surround us. We are a special people ... God's people.

# **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

## **Chapter Three**

### **Baptism**

Christian water baptism was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ in His parting commission to His disciples (**Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16**). These words are inescapable in their importance and meaning.

Logically, the first question existing in the mind of the young Christian is:

#### **1. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN WATER BAPTISM, ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE?**

- a. Baptism is **never** anything more than a **symbol** of certain Biblical truths having to do with salvation and the work of the Godhead in redemption. It is erroneous and un-Scriptural to say that it is essential to salvation, or that it adds to salvation (**Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:20**).

## FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND

b. It is **immersion in water**. This is evident from the following facts:

- 1) The meaning of the word. In the original Greek language the word "baptism" always means "to dip", "immerse", "put under". Standard Greek lexicons uniformly give this meaning.
- 2) The plain statements of Scripture. ***"They went down both into the water"; "When they were come up out of the water"*** (Acts 8:38-39). ***"Jesus ... went up straightway out of the water,"*** after John had baptized Him (Matt. 3:16).
- 3) What Baptism symbolizes. The new birth is set forth in symbol (Rom. 6:4; Titus 3:5). Immersion in the water of

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Christian baptism symbolizes the reality of the Spirit and the complete redemption work of Christ as the believer enters the grave with Christ, and is there loosed from his sins (**Rom. 6:6**), and is raised with Christ in resurrection power (**Rom. 6:8**). There is immersion into the death of Christ, submersion into His burial, and emergence into His resurrection.

4) The testimony of history. Here we find tremendous evidence for immersion as the earliest form of baptism. We submit one quotation from the Didache, which is reputedly and by agreement of most scholars one of the most ancient and authoritative documents of the Early

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Church, probably dating back to the first century:

“As regards baptism baptize in this manner: Having first given all the preceding instructions, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in living (running) water.”

“But if thou has no living water, baptize into other water, and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm...”

Thus we have a direct historical reference to immersion as a legitimate form of Christian baptism.

c. It is **triple or trine immersion in water.**

This is evident from the following facts:

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

- 1) The meaning of the word. The Greek word "**baptize**" is a frequentative verb meaning "to dip repeatedly", not just once. This fact is upheld by Thayer and other Greek lexicons.
- 2) The plain statement of Christ. Grammarians have agreed that Christ's command demands a triple action, an immersion in recognition of each of three divine persons – "***In the name of the Father,***" "***and of the Son,***" "***and of the Holy Ghost***" (Matt. 28:19. ) This was Christ's last statement on the subject to His disciples before ascending. We would expect it to be complete and final.
- 3) What trine immersion symbolizes. The work of each member of the Godhead in salvation is seen (**Titus 3:4-6**).



## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

Baptize in the **name of the Father**. Why?

**Verse 4** - He is the SOURCE of salvation;  
the fount from which all blessings flow.

Baptize in the **name of the Son**. Why?

**Verse 6** - He is the CHANNEL of salvation.  
His blood was shed and His body given.

Baptize in the **name of the Holy Ghost**.

Why? **Verse 5** - He is the AGENT who has  
applied all the redemptive blessings to  
our hearts and lives.

Trine immersion alone can fully paint  
this glorious picture.

Likewise are the tri-unity and the unity  
of the Godhead depicted in trine  
immersion, for there are three  
immersions in recognition of three  
members in the Godhead, but one

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

complete baptism signifying their perfect oneness.

- 4) The testimony of history. Here again we find strong evidence in favor of trine immersion. The Apostolic Canons taken from the Didache about the second century gave exhortation concerning those turning from trine immersion to other forms of so-called baptism:

“If any bishop or presbyter does not perform the three immersions, but only one immersion, let him be deposed.” Evidently this was a serious misdemeanor in the Early Church.

- 5) Its complete acceptance in most denominations. Practically all churches will accept your membership on the basis of trine immersion. This is not true

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

of other modes of baptism. Therefore it must be the most complete form of baptism.

### **2. WHY SHOULD BELIEVERS BE BAPTIZED?**

- a. Because the Lord Jesus Christ commands it (**Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16**).
  
- b. Because baptism publicly identifies the believer with Christ (**I John 2:3-4**). It substantiates the Christian's profession before men.
  
- c. Because it is considered the door into the visible local church. The Early Church plainly considered it essential to membership (**Acts 2:41**). There is no indication that anyone ever joined the early churches without baptism.

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- d. Because of the additional blessing it brings from heaven through our obedience (**John 15:10**).

### **3. WHEN SHOULD BELIEVERS BE BAPTIZED?**

- a. The Bible sets no specific time for baptism. However, judging from the practice of the Early Church, water baptism was very closely associated in time with the confession of Christ (**Acts 2:41; 8:35-39; 9:17-18; 10:44-48**).
- b. We judge from the symbolic meaning of baptism that it should take place as soon as possible after regeneration.

### **4. SHOULD INFANTS BE BAPTIZED?**

The time of life when different children feel the pangs of conscience for the first time, know the distinct difference between right and wrong, and can intelligently accept Christ as

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their own personal Saviour, will vary greatly. No infant should be baptized because:

- a. The Scriptures do not command it. Neither Christ nor the sacred writers ever even intimated that infants should be baptized.
- b. Not a single case can be found clearly in Scripture where baptism was administered to such an infant.
- c. The very meaning of baptism forbids it. (See statement under 3b). The spiritual experience has not taken place in the heart of the child. Since baptism is not essential to salvation there is absolutely no need for its administration; in fact, there is definite danger in it.

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d. It was an early misconception of the meaning of baptism that originated infant baptism. Neander, the reliable Jewish historian, says:

“Infant baptism began in the North African church in the middle of the third century, but was not generally prevalent until several centuries after. The coming of the idea of no salvation without baptism caused both infant baptism and infant communion.” Thus history proves it was not practiced by the earliest church.

e. Baptism means nothing to the applicant and is just an empty form unless understood by him. The mind of a child at this age is not capable of grasping this profound symbolism.

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- f. Circumcision of infants under Old Testament law does not predicate their baptism under grace because: first, law and grace are the widest opposites; second, God dealt with Abraham's earthly seed in circumcision with a distinct plan in mind, but now is dealing with his spiritual seed in grace; third, circumcision was applied only to males, thus logically only male infants should be baptized; fourth, we must not build a New Testament practice on an Old Testament practice or type unless the text of Scripture clearly indicates that this should be done. We should instead believe and practice the New Testament revelation.
- g. Infant baptism peoples the visible church with unsaved members.

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## **Chapter Four Christian Stewardship**

Christian stewardship assumes a position of major importance in the service of Christ. The Apostle Paul refers to it in both letters to the church at Corinth, while two whole chapters of the second epistle are devoted to its consideration (8-9). Christ referred to it in conversation with the Pharisees (**Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42**) and with His disciples (**Luke 6:38**). The Scriptures indicate various types of stewardship: that of life, time, talents, and material things. Our interest here is particularly in the last. There has been so much un-Biblical teaching on this subject that we are constrained to inquire: "What does the Bible really teach about Christian giving?"



## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

- 1. IT IS THE DIRECT COMMAND OF GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN BOTH THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENTS (Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:1-10; Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42; 6:38; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 8:7-9, 24)**

This command is just as imperative as that concerning baptism. Every believer, young or old, rich or poor, is called upon to obey (I Cor. 16:2 "*every one of you*").

- 2. IT IS A VOLUNTARY, SPONTANEOUS, HILARIOUS STEWARDSHIP (II Cor. 9:7)**

Forced, compulsory giving is not acceptable with God, and should not be practiced. The constraining love of Christ must motivate the offerings of His people (II Cor. 8:9, 11-12). It is not a duty to be performed, but a privilege to be enjoyed.

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### **3. IT IS AT LEAST ONE-TENTH OF THE GROSS INCOME ACCORDING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT STANDARD (Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 23:23)**

A careful study of Jewish giving will reveal that he gave nearer one-fifth to one-third rather than one-tenth of his income. It was the common custom to set aside the Lord's share from the income first (**Exod. 22:29-30**). True, tithing was a part of the law, but it becomes a valuable, basic standard for Christian stewardship under grace. The Christian should not give less than one-tenth of his gross income.

### **4. IT IS GIVING "AS GOD HATH PROSPERED" (I Cor. 16:2)**

Both Old and New Testament systems embody the idea of "proportionate" giving. All the wealth of the world belongs to God (**Hag. 2:8; Psa. 50:11-12; 24:1**), but He asks for only a part of it in return.

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Should this part be less or more than one-tenth today? It should not be less! It certainly could be more: first, because Jesus Christ has done so much more for us in this age of grace (**II Cor. 8:9**); second, because grace is so much better than law (**Gal. 3:10-14**); third, because our future prospects in Christ are greater than those of Israel (**I John 3:2; Isa. 11**). As the believer's love for Christ increases, so will his gifts!

### **5. IT IS SYSTEMATIC STEWARDSHIP (I Cor. 16:2 "upon the first day of the week").**

At regular periods, preferably weekly, the offering of the saints should be placed on the altar of service. Systematic gifts make systematic progress possible.

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

### **6. IT IS STEWARDSHIP WHICH BRINGS REWARD (Prov. 19:17; Luke 6:38)**

Future reward should not be the incentive in giving, but is inseparably connected with it. God will duly reward the faithful stewardship of His people.

### **7. IT GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBEY GOD IN PROVIDING MATERIALLY FOR THOSE WHO MINISTER TO US SPIRITUALLY (I Thess. 5:12-13; I Tim. 5:17, 18)**

God's messengers are worthy of financial support. Their labors should be rewarded by adequate provisions to enable them to continue on in their ministry.

### **8. IT GIVES US THE PRIVILEGE OF ASSISTING MISSIONARIES IN THEIR WORK OF WORLD EVANGELIZATION (Phil. 4:10-17; Luke 8:2, 3; II Cor. 8:9)**

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

This lets us share in the fruit of these faithful workers as we enable them to obey the "Great Commission" as our representatives.

### **9. IT GIVES US A WAY OF PROVIDING FOR THE NEEDY, INCLUDING THE WIDOWS AND FATHERLESS WITHIN THE CHURCH (Acts 6:1, 2; I Tim. 5:3, 9, 10; James 1:27)**

Brethren look to God for ways to meet the needs of our people. We seek to assist especially those who find themselves helpless due to handicap, widowhood, or the lacking of a father.

# **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

## **Chapter Five**

### **Three-Fold Communion Service**

The ordinances of the Christian church are simply those means used by God to remind His people of certain great, spiritual, foundational truths upon which the house of their redemption is built. Both Christ and the apostles clearly enjoined the observance of the ordinances (**John 13:17; I Cor. 11:23**).

However, especially in this day of legalistic tendencies, God's people must be warned against relying upon the observance of the ordinances for the gaining of salvation, standing, and favor with God. Rather, view them as tender, loving reminders of the past, present, and future ministry of Christ in redeeming His own, and as a means of subsequent spiritual growth.

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The Brethren people, together with other groups of believers, follow a distinctive, Biblical service of communion, setting forth the threefold ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ in symbol. This service consists of the communion of the bread and cup, the washing of the saints' feet, and the love feast.

Perhaps the greatest single passage in the New Testament on the past, present, and future ministry of Christ is **Ephesians 5:25 to 27**.

### **PAST MINISTRY OF CHRIST**

**Verse 25** narrates the blessed fact of the vicarious death of Christ because He loved lost, dying sinners. The greatest commentary in Scripture on this statement was written by the same Apostle Paul (**Phil. 2:5-8**). No instance of greater humility, love, and sacrifice has ever been recorded. In God's own due time Christ died for the ungodly (**Rom. 5:6**). Four times do the Gospel writers narrate this story of divine love and suffering on

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

Golgotha's brow. There the blood of Jesus Christ was given, and His blood shed for **ALL** sinners (**Ps. 22; Isa. 53**).

As a direct result of this efficacious sacrifice, "**whosoever will**" may be saved by belief in the Lord Jesus Christ (**John 3:16; Acts 16:31; 4:12**). The believer is immediately justified, declared righteous in God's sight, just as if he had never sinned (**Rom. 5:1**).

How beautifully, then, does the cup and the bread symbolize what Christ did for His bride in the past. Paul sums up the whole matter in one brief statement (**I Cor. 11:26**). The broken bread, which symbolizes His broken body, and the wine, which symbolizes His shed blood, become the sacred emblems of our Lord's past ministry.



## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

### **PRESENT MINISTRY OF CHRIST**

Verse 26 of the **Ephesian** text teaches us that Christ sought and saved us in the past, He also cares for us in the present by continually washing us from daily sin in the “*laver*” of His Word.

The Old Testament “*laver*” or “*basin*”, in which the priest washed himself, is used by the Apostle as a type of that which is now our Lord’s instrument of cleansing for the saints (**Exod. 30:17-21**).

The blessed result in our lives is a complete, daily purging from the power and defilement of sin. As we walk through a sinful world order, we are constantly contaminated by contacts with it. This contamination does not in any way impair our “standing” in Christ (**I Cor. 1:4-9**) but necessitates the cleansing of our “state” (**Col. 3:1, 8-9**). We are progressively sanctified as we study, read, and practice the Word of God, and bathe in its fathomless depths (**John 17:17**).

## MINISTRY OF CHRIST IN SYMBOL

| TIME     | PAST   | PRESENT  | FUTURE  |
|----------|--|--|---|
| Nature   | Death<br>Rom. 5:6; Eph. 5:25;<br>Heb. 9:26                       | Washing Believers<br>in Laver of Word<br>Eph. 5:26; John 17:17 | Rapture of Church<br>(Body of Christ)<br>I Thess. 4:13-18;<br>Eph. 5:27                 |
| Result   | Salvation from Guilt<br>of Sin<br>Acts 4:12; 16:31;<br>John 5:24 | Daily Cleansing of<br>Believer's Walk<br>Eph. 5:26             | Glorifying of Believer's<br>Body. Rom: 29-30<br>Marriage Supper of<br>Lamb. Rev. 19:7-9 |
| Doctrine | Justification  | Sanctification   | Glorification   |
| Symbol   | Cup and Bread<br>I Cor. 11:26                                    | Feet Washing<br>John 13:1-17                                   | Love Feast<br>John 13:2; Luke 22:20;<br>Jude 12   |

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

How we wonder in profound amazement as we read **John 13:1-17** and see the Lord of glory, Creator of the universe, possessor of heaven and earth, girding himself with a towel and washing the feet of protesting Peter and the other disciples! Yes, here is abject humility and the perfect attitude of the ministering servant, but infinitely more, for here Christ teaches and symbolizes the great truth of the daily cleansing of the believer's walk. *"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them"* (13:17). How utterly indispensable is this present ministry of the Lord.

## **FUTURE MINISTRY OF CHRIST**

**Verse 27** of the **Ephesian** text unfolds a glorious scene before our spiritual eyes. Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, is coming in the air someday to claim His bride, the church (**I Thess. 4:13-18**). A short time after which the bride and the Bridegroom will be seated around the festive board of that celestial palace, partaking of a bounteous feast

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provided by the Father, and fellowshiping in the most intimate communion (**Rev. 19:7-9**).

Our bodies at present afford us little more than pain, suffering, and discomfort, but how wonderful to realize that when we see Jesus face to face, our old body will be changed and fashioned anew after the pattern of the Lord's own glorified body (**Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:29-30; I Cor. 15:53**). Glorification of the body is the door to future, heavenly fellowship with Christ. It is utterly impossible for these sinful, earthly bodies to enjoy and appreciate the blessings of such fellowship (**Matt. 17:1-8**).

Our gracious Lord has not left us without an appropriate symbol of this aspect of His ministry. We learn that before going to the cross He ate a supper with His disciples (**John 13:2; I Cor. 11:25; Luke 22:20**). This is properly called "*the Lord's Supper*". It was the consistent custom of early Christians to participate in such "love feasts" (**Jude 12**). The Apostle Paul reproved the sinful

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conduct of the Corinthians on such occasions (I **Cor. 11:21-22**). What glorious prospects are before us as we fellowship in this symbol of Christ's future ministry!

In Scriptures the "kiss" has been invested with many different meanings. There is the "kiss of sin" (**Prov. 7:13**), the "kiss of betrayal" (**Matt. 26:48**), the "kiss of love" (**I Sam. 20:41**), and so forth. The Early Church consistently used the kiss, not as a common greeting, but as a beautiful, holy symbol of love and fellowship in Jesus Christ (**I Thess. 5:26; Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20; I Pet. 5:14**). As a part of the service of the washing of these saints' feet, men with men, and women with women, it becomes a tender symbol of the sacred bond and relationship existing between us as Christians and our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## **Chapter Six**

### **The Bible**

The Scriptures serve as the one and only true authority for the child of God. Our motto is “The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible”. These 66 books (39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament) make up God’s completed revelation to mankind.

The Scriptures were pure in their eternal source (**Psm. 119:89, 140, 152**), given in purity by process of divine inspiration (**II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:21**), and preserved word for word in purity (**Psm. 119:140, 160; Prov. 30:5; I Pet. 1:23, 25; Matt. 4:4; Mark 13:31**) for our benefit. They are therefore accurate and trustworthy in all areas and on all subjects of which they speak. God will not allow them to be corrupted by change, addition, or subtraction and His curse is upon any who would try (**Rev. 22:18, 19; Deut. 4:2**).

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God expects us to benefit from His Holy Word and then to share that benefit with others.

We should read it (**Rev. 1:3**), study it (**II Tim. 2:15**), understand it (**I Cor. 2:14**), memorize it (**Psm. 119:11**), meditate upon it (**Psm. 1:2**), live it (**Psm. 119:9**), explain it (**Neh. 8:8**), teach it (**Acts 15:35**), and preach it (**II Tim. 4:2**).

God used His Word in the saving of sinners (**I Pet. 1:23-25; James 1:18**), in the cleansing of the saved (**Eph. 5:26; Psm. 119:9**), in the giving of victory over Satan and temptation (**Eph. 6:10-17**), and in the judging of the World (**John 12:47, 48**).

The Scriptures should be taken literally unless they tell you to understand them differently. God is fully able to say what He means, and certainly means what He has said.

Satan has managed to introduce great confusion in recent years on the subject of various translations of the Bible. This is especially true in the English language where various publishers

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introduce their particular versions like clockwork to a gullible public.

We stand without apology for the excellence, accuracy, and trustworthiness of the Authorized Version of 1611 (commonly called the King James Version), and believe it to be safely called "**the Word of God**". More recent translations vary in accuracy due to reliance on corrupted manuscripts (Westcott-Hort, Nestle, etc.), improper translation methods (paraphrase, dynamic equivalency, etc.), bias of unsaved translators (Unitarians, Liberals, Roman Catholics, Church of Christ, etc.), concern for maximizing publishers' profits, and/or sometimes the inability of those doing the translation work. These new versions are weak on the virgin birth, the Lordship, the deity, and the blood of Jesus; they weaken the doctrine of the Trinity, and they downplay some of the miracles as well as the spiritual practice of fasting. They lack the power and blessing of God due to their unenlightened



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changes and are doomed to eventually become as forgotten as dozens of others from previous years.

# **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

## **Chapter Seven**

### **The Church, Evangelism, and Missions**

#### **1. JESUS IS THE OWNER, HEAD, BUILDER, AND PROTECTOR OF THE CHURCH (Col. 1:18; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23)**

The “universal body of Christ” (all saved people), as well as the “local church” are ordained by God. Visibly He works through the local church as an observable expression of His Body here on Earth. The emphasis of the Scriptures is on the local church for which He shed His blood (**Acts 20:28**).

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

### **2. JESUS IS THE FOCUS, THE DRAWING FORCE, AND THE PRE-EMINENT ONE IN THE CHURCH (Col. 1:17-19; John 12:21, 32; 6:37, 44)**

Jesus is the reason for attending church services. Never should pastor or program, entertainment or politics, business or popularity, prestige or emotions be the attraction. Promotions, gimmicks, and/or bribes are especially repulsive to God. Hotdogs, lollipops, bubblegum, and carnivals have nothing to do with vital Christianity.

### **3. THE CHURCH IS A GROUP OF SAVED PEOPLE GATHERED TOGETHER BY GOD FOR THEIR GOOD AND HIS GLORY (I Pet. 5:1-7; Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:5-11)**

God gathers and organizes His children for their safety, health, benefit, and usefulness. We recognize the first day of the week as a day of rest and worship during which we

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fellowship, pray, teach, preach, exhort, worship, and train laborers. The Chief Shepherd (Jesus) ministers to His sheep (**John 10:14-16, 17-29**) through His chosen servants. We are thus prepared to be holy and useful, to love and care one for another, and to encourage the weak and discipline the rebellious. The Bible speaks very clearly in **I Cor. 5:12, 13** of those within and without the membership of a local church.

### **4. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S BASE FOR EVANGELISM AND WORLD MISSIONS (Acts 13:1-4; 19:9, 10; I Thess. 1:8)**

The Bible-believing church will train its people to evangelize the lost, encourage them in their work, and assist them as needed. God works through the church to select, send, and support its laborers to areas at a distance. Sometimes churches

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may support laborers sent from other churches as in the case of the Church at Phillipi supporting the Apostle Paul (from Antioch). A healthy church will seek to constantly be involved in both evangelistic and missionary work. Jesus our Head will plant more churches and bless us with world evangelism only as we obey. Let us realize that every neighborhood and settlement **must** have a clear gospel testimony; whether it be a church, a mission, or a Bible class.

# **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

## **Chapter Eight The Christian Home**

God has instituted the home for the benefit of mankind. The Bible speaks clearly on many such related subjects as marriage, parenting, children, hospitality, husband-wife relationships, divorce, re-marriage, adultery, finances, and devotional life. In that God created the first home with the first humans (Adam and Eve); in that He laid down rules for direction and blessing in the home; and in that He has ordained the home as the basic unit of society; let us consider some of the most basic Bible truths on this subject.

### **1. MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE AND THE DOOR TO CERTAIN PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (Heb. 13:4; I Tim. 4:3; Prov. 18:22; 19:14; John 4:17, 18)**

Satan resists this clear and simple teaching by confusing the thoughts of his followers.

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The judgment of God is upon those who try to ignore this basic principle.

### **2. THE HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIP IS CLEARLY SPELLED OUT BY GOD (Eph. 5:22-33; I Pet. 3:1-9)**

Picturing salvation the husband has the greater responsibility of loving the wife as Jesus loved the Church. He is to picture Jesus and God the Father while the wife in submission pictures the Church and the saint. Their relationship should illustrate these great Bible truths to their children, relatives, neighbors, and friends.

### **3. CHILDREN BELONG TO GOD AND ARE ENTRUSTED TO PARENTS FOR PROPER TRAINING (Psm. 127:3; Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:6, 7; Prov. 22:6, 15; Prov. 23:13, 14; 29:15; Gen. 18:19)**

It is an awesome task to lovingly raise children to be useful citizens and disciples of

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Jesus. To balance encouragement with reproof, teaching with discipline, and example with correction, requires maturity, knowledge, and God's help. The strength of the church, the stability of government, and the home-life of the next generation is dependent on the success of properly training this generation.

### **4. THE FAMILY IS A BASE FOR TEACHING AND PRACTICING BIBLE TRUTHS (II Tim. 1:3, 5; 3:14, 15; Eph. 6:4)**

What sweet lessons are learned during family devotions and prayers! Lessons of faith, separation, fellowship, hospitality, love, sacrifice, evangelism, leadership, confession, forgiveness, consistency, faithfulness, honesty, hard work, finances, giving, thrift, attitudes, encouragement, peace and far more are usually learned first in the home. Here truth is put to the test in practice to find its usefulness in daily life.



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### **5. MARRIAGE IS A LIFELONG RELATIONSHIP (Rom. 7:2, 3; I Cor. 7:10, 11, 39; Mark 10:2-12)**

God never intended that we should have divorce (**Mark 10:9**), and has even more clearly spoken against re-marriage to a second mate during the life-time of the first mate. Breakable marriages damage the picture of an eternally secure salvation. Those having two living spouses find that there are certain areas of reaping in their lives (even after repentance) for violating the laws and principles of God. Therefore God in mercy limits certain areas of responsibility within the church so as to keep them from being pressed beyond measure.

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### **Chapter Nine**

#### **Non-Swearing**

The swearing of an oath is simply the invoking of a higher authority to establish the truth of any statement with the consequent visitation of punishment if that statement be proved false (**Matt. 26:74**).

History proves that the oath was practiced by the earliest people. Later, it was made an integral part of the Mosaic Law by the divine Author (**Exod. 22:11**) and became a consistent custom in Israel.

However, with the incarnation of the blessed Christ, and the subsequent testimony of both Himself and the inspired New Testament penmen in the age of grace, the oath is removed to a position of lesser importance. Now we are commanded to **"SWEAR NOT AT ALL"**. Why?

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

### **1. BECAUSE GOD'S WORD COMMANDS IT (James 5:12; II Cor. 2:17)**

The Christian is primarily one who obeys the commandments of God and Christ (I John 2:3). Swearing an oath is a direct disobedience of this divine command.

### **2. BECAUSE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CLEARLY PROHIBITED IT IN HIS OWN WORDS (Matt. 5:33-37)**

Our love and dedication to Christ are measured by obedience to His Word (I John 2:4-5).

### **3. BECAUSE THE AVERAGE OATH INVOKES THE WRATH OF GOD UPON THOSE WHO BREAK IT (Ruth 1:17; I Sam. 3:17)**

Many times men have not the power to keep an oath. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

## **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

### **4. BECAUSE THE OATH IS AN INSULT TO THE TRUTH AND INTEGRITY OF A CHRISTIAN'S WORD.**

We are little patterns of the One who said: "*I am the truth*" (John 14:6). The simple affirmative or negative statement of a Christian is sufficient. Anything more is "*of evil*" (Matt. 5:37). **The bond established by a Christian's word should be equal to that of an oath.**

### **5. BECAUSE THE OATH ENCOURAGES THE COMMISSION AND COVERING OF SIN.**

Oathbound societies or lodges command **supreme obedience** to the tenets of the oath and laws of the organization, whether right or wrong, thus encouraging sin (I John 3:8). They likewise encourage the systematic covering of sin whenever necessary (Prov. 28:13).

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### **6. BECAUSE THE OATH ENCOURAGES SECRECY WHICH IS CONTRARY TO THE GENERAL TENOR OF SCRIPTURE (Eph. 5:11- 12; Matt. 5:15-16; John 18:20)**

The Christian life is an open book to be known and read of all men.

Therefore, the Christian will refuse to swear an oath **under any circumstances.**

For those who, like the Brethren, feel bound by the Word of the Lord in this matter, the American government has made gracious provision so that the Christian is required only to “**affirm**”, and need not “**swear**” by any civil oath.

# **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

## **Chapter Ten**

### **Anointing the Sick**

There are many contributing causes for the physical ills of the human race. But at the base of all of them lies that unholy thing called "sin". It is the ultimate birthplace of all human diseases (**Deut. 28:15-25; Lev. 26:15-16; Psm. 107:17**).

Our gracious Heavenly Father, in addition to formulating a plan for our spiritual redemption, has supplied through His sovereignty will the panacea for physical illnesses. This doctrine of divine healing has been shamefully misused since its inception by careless, mercenary interpreters of the Scripture (**Acts 8:9-23; II Kings 5:1-16**). No other doctrine of divine revelation deserves more prayerful and reserved consideration.

The Brethren believe that God can and will health His own through Christ and **according to His**

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own will and purpose, but not in the wholesale manner taught by certain religious groups. What, then, is God's plan of healing for this age? Our New Testament formula is found in **James 5:14-16**, as follows:

1. The believer should take the **initiative**. This is a direct **command (v. 14)**.
2. At least **two** male elders should be called, preferably from the local church (**v. 14**).
3. As a necessary preparation for the anointing service all **sin** should be **confessed**. Unconfessed sin will hinder the work of the Spirit in healing (**vs. 15-16**).
4. Let the elders **anoint** the sick one with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oil in Scripture is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the anointing simply symbolizes the coming of the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ and in power to perform His office work. He, not the oil, does the healing. Even Christ healed through the Spirit (**Matt. 12:28**).

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5. Let the elder then **pray** for the afflicted one (v. 14). It is the “prayer of faith” heals the sick (v. 15). Faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). He may evidence His will for any particular case by either giving or withholding this faith.

It is very important to remember the following additional facts:

Prayer may be offered for healing and the healing received without the anointing service.

This service is usually sought only in cases of serious illness. The Greek work indicates that the patient is sick in bed (v. 15).

Prayer for the sick must be **according to the will of God (I John 5:14)**. He may not desire to give healing. If the prayer is not offered in



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His will, the inference is that He will not hear. Remember there is a “*sickness to the glory of God*” (John 11:4; II Cor. 12:8-9; Acts 19:11).

God does not promise immediate healing, although He may give it.

The Great Physician frequently uses different means to the desired end. The afflicted believer should call a physician when ill, and give God a chance to work through him as an instrument. If the Lord wishes to demonstrate His power, He may wait till the physician has failed and then heal. Remember, Jesus refused to ask God to demonstrate His power when not necessary (Luke 4:12).

# **FOR THESE TRUTHS WE STAND**

## **Chapter Eleven Statement of Faith**

The following Statement of Faith, although not a creed, summarizes briefly and generally those Biblical truths which are believed and practiced by the Bible Brethren Church of Hagerstown, Maryland, and those associated with us.

We, in harmony with our historic position, believing the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible to be our infallible rule of faith and of practice, and feeling our responsibility to make known the divine message of the Bible, present the following articles as a statement of those basic truths taught in the Bible which are common to our Christian faith and practice:

- 1. THE BIBLE:** The Word of God, the sixty-six Books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore

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wholly without error as originally given of God (**II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21**). We further believe God preserved what He gave and that the Authorized Version of 1611 (KJV) is a result and to be used as the accurate version of our day (**Matt. 5:18; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17**).

2. **THE ONE TRUE GOD:** existing eternally as three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (**Luke 3:22; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14**).
3. **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:** His pre-existence and deity (**John 1:1-3**), incarnation by virgin birth (**John 1:14; Matt. 1:18-23**), sinless life (**Heb. 4:15**), substitutionary death (**II Cor. 5:21**); bodily resurrection (**Luke 24:36-43**), ascension into heaven and present ministry (**Heb. 4:14-16**), and coming again (**Acts 1:11**).

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4. **THE HOLY SPIRIT:** His personality (**John 16:7-15**); and deity (**Acts 5:3-4**); and His work in each believer: Baptism and indwelling at the moment of regeneration (**I Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9**); and filling (**Eph. 5:18**) to empower for Christian life and service (**Eph. 3:16; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22-23**).

5. **MAN:** his direct creation in the image of God (**Gen. 1:26-28**), his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death (**Gen. 3:1-24; Rom. 5:12**), and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation (**John 3:3-5**).

6. **SALVATION:** a complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone, received as the gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (**Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6; I Peter 1:18-19**).

7. **THE CHURCH:** one true Church, the body and bride of Christ (**Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-32**),

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composed of all true believers of the present age (**I Cor. 12:12-13**); and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for world-wide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (**Eph. 4:11-16**).

- 8. CHRISTIAN LIFE:** a life of righteousness, good works, and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (**Rom. 12:1-2**), manifested by speaking the truth (**James 5:12**), maintaining the sanctity of the home (**Eph.5:22-6:4**), settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God (**I Cor. 6:1-8**), showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men (**Rom. 12:17-21**), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-23**), and maintaining a life of prayer (**Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6**), including the privilege, when sick, of calling for the elders of the

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church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord (**James 5:13-18**).

**9. ORDINANCES:** the Christian should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are (1) baptism of believers by trine immersion (**Matt. 28:19**) and (2) the three-fold communion service, consisting of the washing of the saints' feet (**John 13:1-17**), the Lord's Supper (**I Cor. 11:20-22, 33:34; Jude 12**), and the communion of the bread and the cup (**I Cor. 11:23-26**).

**10. SATAN:** his existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people (**Rev. 12:1-10**), his judgment (**John 12:31**) and the final doom (**Rev. 20:10**).

**11. THE SECOND COMING:** the personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His Church from the earth (**I Thess. 4:16-17**)

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before the tribulation (I Thess. 1:10; Rev. 3:10), and afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (Rev. 19:11-20:6).

**12. FUTURE LIFE:** the conscious existence of the dead (Phil. 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31), the resurrection of the body (John 5:28-29), the judgment and reward of believers (Rom. 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10), the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15), the eternal life of the saved (John 3:16), and the eternal punishment of the lost (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15).



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