

THIS WE BELIEVE

STATEMENT OF FAITH

This doctrinal statement is a summary of the foundational beliefs of this local assembly of the Christian Brethren fellowship.

This statement is a document of convenient reference. It does not represent all the Scriptural beliefs of this church, for which, recourse would have to be made to the entire revelation of the Holy Scriptures known as the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

Inroads have been and are being made into the ranks of the Christian Brethren movement in Jamaica due to one reason or another.

In view of this, a group of concerned brethren met and discussed the approach that could best be adopted to check this rut.

Out of these discussions came the observation that many from our company were departing either from the faith or alternatively from our fellowship because they were not sure of what the Brethren believed.

While many other groups had a documented statement of faith, the Christian Brethren had none.

There were many also in our fellowship who were unable to define and defend their beliefs and were therefore vulnerable to other persuasions whose membership could define and defend their stand.

Some of our local assemblies had produced statements of faith which, to a great extent, simply said that the Bible was their reference.

These statements were so vague as to allow for ambiguous interpretations which could support conflicting viewpoints not held by the Brethren. It became apparent that a much more tightly worded statement was required.

The Elders & Workers Committee, operating against this background, accepted the challenge to provide such a document within a limited time frame.

They then commissioned Mr. Billy Hall, an accredited worker among the Brethren, to produce a comprehensive document which would form the basis for discussion at their next conference. This conference was due to be convened at the Midland Bible Institute between Monday, May 26 to Thursday, May 29, 1986.

Mr. Hall, who is a graduate of the University of the West Indies in Mass Communication, and a Journalist by profession, rose to the occasion and produced quite a comprehensive paper in time for the conference and for this we are grateful. He divided the paper into three sections. These were:

Section A – Dealing with Doctrines (which this booklet comprises.)

Section B – Dealing with our Practices

Section C – Dealing largely with Administrative Policies

These papers were used as the basis of a good many discussional

sessions at Midland Bible Institute, Hart's air conditioned diner at Hagley Park Plaza and also at the Annex at Bethany Gospel Hall.

The sessions were very well attended by a wide cross-section of the leadership of the Assemblies in Jamaica, with vigorous participation and dialogue and the intermittent meetings spanned many years.

We were able to draw upon the collective knowledge of the leaders some with their expertise in original languages, others with their years of experience in teaching the word, some with their professional training and others with just plain common sense. Each contribution, we believe, was used by the Holy Spirit who blended them well in helping us to produce the end result.

There were deletions, additions, amendments, re-phrasing and refining in arriving at the present product. This product is submitted as a book of easy reference, but does not preclude room for further refinement.

It should however, be respected as a sincere attempt to make a meaningful contribution to the Brethren Movement in Jamaica, representing as it does, the collective wisdom of its present seasoned as well as younger leaders. If it succeeds in stemming the drift from our ranks, God would be glorified, and our labours would not have been in vain.

This book may also be used by the teachers in the Assemblies for continuing indepth study with the congregation.

Our acknowledgment and thanks to all who contributed in one way or another, are hereby recorded.

I can only hope that the booklet will prove invaluable to all its readers.

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Victor McGibbon
Chairman
Elders & Workers Conference

I. The Bible

We believe that . . .

- A. All scripture is given by the inspiration of God. The Bible – the Word of God – is a collection of 66 books that forms a closed canon: a disclosure by God of His person, power, and purpose for the Ages, revealing His plan of salvation for man.

(II Tim. 3:16, 17; I Peter 1:25)

We believe that . . .

- B. The authors of the original books of the Bible were men inspired of God to produce every book completely free of error of any kind, in all that is affirmed. Inspiration is claimed for the autographs only, and is verbal and plenary.

(Matt. 5:18; II Peter 1:20, 21)

We believe that . . .

- C. The Bible contains sufficient knowledge for man's salvation.

(John 6:63).

We believe that . . .

- D. The authority of the Bible is supreme and sufficient as a guide for deciding on all matters of Christian faith and conduct and all matters pertaining to growth and development in Christian life and experience.

(John 17:17; I Cor. 2:13; Heb. 4:12)

II. The Godhead

We believe that . . .

- A. There is one God who is eternal, perfect, holy, invisible in essence, omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (everywhere present), Maker of heaven and earth, Ruler of the universe, Sustainer of all things.

(Gen. 17:1; Ex. 20:2, 3; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 90:2, 83:18; John 4:26)

We believe that . . .

- B. God exists in three persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit – all of the same essence or substance – indivisible, a trinity in unity.

(Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 8:6; Phil. 2:5, 6; Col. 2:9)

We believe that . . .

- C. The relationship of all three members of the Godhead is harmonious and simultaneous in operations yet in the provision of man's salvation each makes a distinctive contribution.

(Eph. 2:18, I John 5:7)

III. God the Father

We believe that . . .

- A. God the Father is the first person of the Godhead, whose distinctive role is to be discerned in creation, in Israel's election, and in providing for those who love Him, salvation, justification, glorification.

(Gen. 1:1; Rom. 8:29-30; Rom. 9)

We believe that . . .

- B. It was God the Father's great love for the world that moved Him to give His Son, to send the Holy Spirit, to grant forgiveness of sins and to answer prayers.

(Matt. 21:22; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4)

We believe that . . .

- C. God the Father's distinctive role in providence is His ordering of events, preserving of mankind, creating and sustaining of the universe, and restraining of evil forces.

(Ex. 15:13; I Chron. 29:11; Ps. 104:24, 147:5; Is. 37:16; Acts 17:24)

We believe that . . .

- D. In the consummation of things God the Father shall bring His purpose to a head, in Christ Jesus, in a most orderly and wise way.

(John 14:6; Rom. 11:33)

IV. God the Son

We believe that . . .

- A. God the Son, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, is eternally existent, equal with, and of the same substance as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Even though God the Son, as Jesus, became man, born of a virgin, He was a sinlessly perfect being, fully man and at the same time fully God.

(Micah 5:2; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 2:14; Heb. 1:3)

We believe that . . .

- B. God the Son's primary purpose in becoming man and as such fulfilling an earthly mission, was to provide salvation for all men, and that those of the human race who receive this salvation are saved forever from the wrathful judgement of God.

(John 3:16; Heb. 1:3, 2:14, 15; I John 2:2)

We believe that . . .

- C. While Jesus was on earth His outstanding good works, amazing miracles and authoritative preaching authenticated His claim to be the Messiah, and Saviour of the world, sent of God, the second man and last Adam whose redemptive work restores the damage of the first Adam.

(John 6:14; Acts 2:22; I Cor. 15:15—47)

We believe that . . .

- D. Jesus, in fulfillment of God the Father's design and will, as well as His own will, voluntarily gave His life, motivated by love, as a substitutionary offering, for man's sin, which offering was found perfectly acceptable to God.

(Rom. 3:24, 25; 8:34; Eph. 1:7; I Peter 2:24)

We believe that . . .

- E. Jesus was resurrected bodily, as proof that the work of salvation He accomplished on the Cross was successful and that God the Father approved all that He had done.

(Acts 3:15, 26; Rom. 4:24, 25, 8:34; I Peter 1:3—5)

We believe that . . .

- F. Jesus, after His earthly ministry, ascended into heaven and was exalted as the glorified man to the right hand of God the Father from where He carries out His ministry as Head of the Church, Great High Priest, Mediator, and Guardian, to ensure the successful mission of the Church on earth.

(Acts 1:9, 10; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1)

We believe that . . .

- G. The promise of Jesus to His Church, which He has loved unto death, is that at the end of the Church's witness on earth He will return personally for the Church, so that He can have with Him His saints forever.

(John 14:3; I Thess. 4:13—17; Rev. 19:7—10)

We believe that . . .

- H. Jesus, after taking His saints with Him into glory He will return to earth, with His saints, at the end of the Tribulation, to judge the world in righteousness and to rule humanity in equity, and that His earthly rule and reign will be during the Millennium.

(*II Thess. 1:7–10; Rev. 19:11–21; 20:4*)

V. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that . . .

- A. God the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, equal with the other members of the Godhead in every respect, has been active in all divine operations through the Ages.

(*Gen. 1:2; 6:3; Judges 11:29; 13:25; I Sam. 11:6*)

We believe that . . .

- B. God the Holy Spirit in the past ages has been distinctively active in creation, in prophetic utterances, and in the virgin birth of Christ.

(*Gen. 1:2; II Sam. 23:2; Isa. 61:1–3; Luke 1:35*)

We believe that . . .

- C. God the Holy Spirit is in the world today convicting people of sin, righteousness and judgment, restraining evil in the world, regenerating the lost who submit to His gracious influence, and protecting the Church against Satan's evil devices.

(*John 16:8–11, 13; Titus 3:5*)

We believe that . . .

- D. God the Holy Spirit, the one who originated the Church through the Baptism of all believers into one Body, is active in the Church today indwelling, sealing, directing, teaching, and equipping each believer. He fills and empowers the submissive Christian, thereby producing the fruit of the Spirit for effective Christian living.

(*Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12–13; 6:19; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 1:13–14; 3:17; 4:11, 12; I John 2:27*)

We believe that . . .

- E. God the Holy Spirit after the Church age will continue to exercise a distinctive ministry, particularly during the Millennium.

(*Ezk. 36:26, 27; Rev. 7:3; Eph. 1:13; Rev. 11:11; Isa. 11:2*)

VI. Man

We believe that . . .

- A. Man was created by God, a special being, composed of spirit, soul and body, unique in bearing the image of God and in having moral responsibility and accountability to God.

(*Gen. 1:26, 27; Matt. 10:28; I Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; I Peter 4:5*)

We believe that . . .

- B. Originally the creature man (male and female) was without sin, and lived in a perfect spiritual relationship with God, in a perfect physical environment, as the earth was, but in course of time the first human pair, Adam and Eve, fell prey to the wiles of the devil and by their disobedience to God, brought condemnation to the human race.

(*Gen. 3:1–19; Rom. 3:23; 5:12*)

We believe that . . .

- C. Due to the fall of the first man, Adam, as natural and federal head of the human race, the creature man (male and female) lost his state of innocency, became corrupted in nature and plunged himself and the whole human race into depravity and degeneracy becoming subject to death and God's wrathful judgment of eternal damnation, unless redeemed.

(*Gen. 6:5; Ps. 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21, 23; Acts 16:31; Rom. 1:18–32; 10:9–10; I Cor. 15:45–55; Eph. 1:7; 2:1–3; 8–10, 12; I Peter 1:18–19*).

VII. Salvation

We believe that . . .

- A. Salvation is God's provision for the redemption of condemned man from the awful consequences of sin: past, present and future, through the exercise of personal faith in Christ and His finished work on the Cross.

(*John 6:37–40; Rom. 4:7, 8; 8:1, 38, 39; Titus 2:11–15; I Peter 1:18, 19; I John 5:11–13*)

We believe that . . .

- B. The salvation that God offers is obtained wholly by faith, apart from any praiseworthy character trait or meritorious deed. By a decisive act of faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ, the sincere in heart who exercises this faith is transformed into a new creation, receiving from God justification, the forgiveness of sin, and the gift of the Holy Spirit as a seal of faith as well as assurance of God's continuing care and provision for victorious and effective Christian living and service.

(*John 1:12; 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 5:1; 10:9–10; 12:6–8, 13:13, 14; I Cor. 1:4–8; Gal. 5:13; Eph 2:8–9; Titus 3:6; I Peter 4:10*)

We believe that . . .

C. The gift of salvation is forever.

(*John 10:27–30; Phil. 1:6; II Tim. 1:12; I Peter 1:5*)

VIII. Sanctification

We believe that . . .

A. Sanctification is separation unto God, which has as its goal cleansing from sin.

(*I Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11, 19*)

We believe that . . .

B. Sanctification is received positionally by each believer the moment of conversion by virtue of possession of the Holy Spirit and the finished work of Christ on the cross.

(*Eph. 1:13–14; Heb. 10:10, 14*)

We believe that . . .

C. Sanctification continues for each believer practically, the work of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, enabling the believer to be victorious over sin in the continuous struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, and that such striving is the norm of Christian experience until death or the rapture, when practical sanctification shall be full.

(*John 17:17; Eph. 5:26, 27; I John 2:6, 15, 17; II John 9; Col. 3:1, 2; II Tim. 2:21*)

We believe that . . .

D. Sanctification as daily victory over sin in practical living is through constant submission to the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit who constrains the believer in love to strive unceasingly to be more and more conformed to the perfect image of Christ.

(*Rom. 12:1, 2; I Cor. 6:20; II Cor. 6:14; 7:1; Titus 2:11–15; I Peter 3:15*)

IX. Church

We believe that . . .

- A. The Church in its mystic dimension is the Body of Christ, composed of every individual regenerated by the Holy Spirit, beginning from the day of Pentecost to the Rapture, known to God alone. Each such member is vitally linked to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, through the historic Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Members of this universal Body are called out from among Jews and Gentiles, representing every tongue and tribe, and nation.

(*I Cor. 12:12–14; Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:14–16, 19–22; 3:2–11*)

We believe that . . .

- B. The Church in its practical dimension finds expression in local churches, some grouped denominationally, each unit comprised of professing believers, distinguished by varying beliefs and practices.

(*I Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:22*)

We believe that . . .

- C. The Church in its mystical dimension is the Bride of Christ and as such enjoys an intimate relationship with Christ who personally guarantees the success of the church's earthly mission and will return for the church at the end of that mission, to take the church with Him into glory where the church will be given a position of honour and will be occupied forever with glorifying Christ.

(*I Cor. 15:51–54; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25–27; I Thess. 4:13–18*)

X. The Ordinances

We believe that . . .

- A. The only two ordinances of the Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper because these are the only ones commanded in the Gospels, practised in the Acts and expounded in the Epistles.

(*Matt. 26:26–28; 28:19; Luke 22:19–20; Acts 2:38–42; 8:36, 39; 20:7; Rom. 6:3, 4*)

We believe that . . .

- B. Baptism is properly administered by immersion in order to be accurate in depiction of the believer's identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as to conform with its practice as seen in the New Testament.

(Acts 8:38; Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12)

We believe that . . .

- C. Baptism, though not a condition for salvation, is the privilege and responsibility of every professing believer and should be requested and submitted to, and appreciated as an outward act of an inward reality, an initial public testimony of the individual's experience of regeneration.

(Acts 8:32; I Peter 3:21)

We believe that . . .

- D. The Lord's Supper or The Breaking of Bread, is to be a regular practice of the gathered assembly, in remembrance of the Lord and in declaration of His death until He comes.

(Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-25)

We believe that . . .

- E. The Lord's Supper should be celebrated with the Calvary work of Christ the central focus, of which the simple elements of Bread and the fruit of the vine, are timely reminders.

(I Cor. 10:16)

We believe that . . .

- F. These elements of the Lord's Supper, the bread and the cup, do not undergo any essential changes despite their pointing to the extraordinary facts of the Calvary work of Christ. The gathered assembly should seek during the celebration of this feast to be occupied with the personal relevance and eternal significance of the saving work of Christ.

(John 1:29; I Cor. 11:24-25)

XI. Priesthood

We believe that . . .

- A. The Church as a whole is a priesthood or kingdom of priests: God's community of worshippers and witnesses,

unto an unregenerate world.

(Rev. 5:10; I Peter 2:9)

We believe that . . .

- B. Each and every believer is a priest, so constituted by spiritual calling, cleansing and clothing; committed to offering up continually spiritual sacrifices pleasing to God.
(I Pet. 2:5)

We believe that . . .

- C. Each and every believer in exercise of priestly privilege and power has direct access to God instantly at all times, and full authority to address God and to commune with Him intimately and profoundly. There is need to emphasize the fact of Christ's High Priestly office and the relationship of believers to Him as members of His household.

(Heb. 10:19–22; Heb. 4:16)

We believe that . . .

- D. The divine provision of priesthood for all believers is not from Aaron, Israel's high priest, but from Christ, the Great High Priest of the Church, to whom we belong by spiritual birth, members of His household of faith.

(Heb. 2:13; 3:6)

We believe that . . .

- E. Women, in exercise of their priestly ministry in regard to the functioning of a local assembly are not permitted by God to have ruling power or the privilege of addressing any constituted gathering of the assembly.

(I Cor. 14:27–35; I Tim. 2:11–13)

We believe that . . .

- F. Women, in exercise of their priestly ministry in prayer and prophecy should do so, as divinely required, with their heads veiled.

(I Cor. 11:5, 13)

XII. Spiritual Gifts

We believe that . . .

- A. A spiritual gift is a special ability, sovereignly bestowed, in grace, by God, to the believer, manifested and operated by the Holy Spirit, for profit by way of perfecting

and edifying the church to the glory of God.
(*Rom. 1:11, 11:29, 12:3--8; Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:4-11, I Cor. 14:4, 12, 17, 26; I Peter 4:11*)

We believe that . . .

- B. Spiritual gifts are of varying kind and so should be distinguished for clear understanding of their nature, availability today, and profitable exercise.
(*Rom. 12:6--8; I Cor. 12:1--14:40; Eph. 4:8--14*)

We believe that . . .

- C. The miraculous signs sometimes expressed as gifts were exhibited within Apostolic days as recorded in the New Testament in order to confirm to the hearers that the word being spoken by the Apostles was the Word of God. The Word having been now documented and canonized, does not continue to require similar confirmation by miraculous signs. The miraculous signs have therefore ceased (to be the norm) as in Apostolic times and certainly are not necessary to prove the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life today.
(*Mark 16:17--20; Heb. 2:1--4*)

We believe that . . .

- D. The special leadership gifts of the spirit have been provided by the risen Lord for the equipping of believers for service and for bringing all believers into spiritual maturity.
(*Eph. 4:8--14*)

We believe that . . .

- E. Spiritual gifts are to be exercised in strict accordance with the rules of procedure and order laid down in the scriptures.
(*I Cor. 14*)

We believe that . . .

- F. Christians are to put the showing of love above the exercise of all gifts and to seek zealously to give primary recognition to the most profitable or best gifts.
(*I Cor. 12:28--31; I Cor. 13, 14*)

XIII. Missions

We believe that . . .

- A. Missions, the supreme mission of the Church during

this Age, that is, from the day of Pentecost to the Rapture, is the evangelization of the world.

(Matt. 28:16–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45–49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8)

We believe that . . .

- B. Missions is about reaching with the Gospel message every person outside of Christ, whether or not each such person has ever heard the Gospel message, for all persons outside of Christ are lost.

(Rom. 1:19–23)

We believe that . . .

- C. Missions is the responsibility of every believer and of every local church, and that each believer of each local church should be involved in missionary outreach, directly or indirectly within and across cultures.

(Acts 1:8; 8:1, 4)

XIV. Death

We believe that . . .

- A. Death is a spiritual, physical and eternal reality that has come about as a direct result of God's condemnation of the human race because of Adam's sin.

(Rom. 5:12)

We believe that . . .

- B. In spiritual death, unregenerated man while alive physically, is separated from God but redeemable.

(Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1)

We believe that . . .

- C. In physical death, body, soul and spirit become separated.

(Eccl. 12:7; I Kings 17:21–22; Acts 9:37; II Cor. 5:8)

We believe that . . .

- D. The saved or regenerate dead enter into a state of conscious bliss eternally at the hour of death and that the lost or degenerate dead enter into a state of conscious punishment eternally.

(Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:19–31; II Cor. 5:8)

We believe that . . .

- E. In eternal death man becomes permanently separated from God and is beyond redemption.

(Rev. 20:12–15)

XV. Judgment

We believe that . . .

- A. The judgment of mankind will be by God through Jesus Christ but that there shall be no General Judgment.

(Dan. 7:10; John 5:29; Acts 17:31; Heb. 9:27)

We believe that . . .

- B. The judgment of the saved is unto commendation but that the judgment of the lost is unto condemnation. The works of the saved will be tested for quality and will attract rewards for faithfulness. The works of the lost will count for nothing toward salvation.

(Matt. 25:31–46; I Cor. 3:11–15; Matt. 7:22–23)

We believe that . . .

- C. Only the lost will face the Great White Throne of Judgment where their sentence of eternal separation from God and consignment to the Lake of Fire will be pronounced. This is the second death, which is eternal.

(Rev. 20:11–15)

We believe that . . .

- D. Only the saved will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and shall enjoy forever the presence and joy of the Lord and occupy a position of honour in the world to come, in the eternal mansions now being prepared.

(John 14:1–3; Rom. 6:8; 14:10; I Cor. 3:11–15, II Cor. 5:10)

XVI. Hope

We believe that . . .

- A. The only true hope of the individual, of the Church and of the world is the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Rom. 5:4, 5; 8:24, 25; Heb. 6:18, 19)

We believe that . . .

- B. For the individual outside of Christ, life is meaningless and miserable, and that for the individual who has Christ, who is God's provision for man's fulfillment of highest ideals and spiritual goals, that individual is truly fulfilled.

(John 10:9, 10; Eph. 3:16–19)

We believe that . . .

- C. For the Church, success is assured in the battle against the gates of hell and in fulfillment of the goal of world evangelization.

(Matt. 16:18; 28:18–20; Rev. 5:8–14)

We believe that . . .

- D. The great hope of the Church is the second coming of Christ, which shall be in two stages: The Rapture, when He shall appear in the air for the saints – His Church – and when His feet shall not touch the earth; and the Revelation, when He shall return to earth, bringing with Him the saints of His Church, and His feet shall touch the earth, for He shall sit on a throne and with His saints rule and reign over the earth.

(I Thess. 4:13–17; Titus 2:13; Jude v. 14; Rev. 19:11–16. Rev. 20:4; Matt. 24:23–30)

We believe that . . .

- E. For the world, the events of history are all taking place in accordance with the eternal purposes of God, and will have their ultimate fulfillment in His providential design which focuses centrally upon Jesus Christ as Lord of the universe, with all things put under His feet.

(I Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:10, 11)

XVII. Angels

We believe that . . .

- A. Angels are spirit-beings of intelligence, emotion and power, created by God for the performance of special ministries or services to Him.

(Ezk. 28:11–19; Job 38:7; Heb. 1:7, 14; II Thess 1:7–10)

We believe that . . .

- B. Angels, in relation to human beings enjoy higher rank and possess greater power, being immortal and having the ability to move about more freely, even in the air, and to control their visibility to man.

(Eph. 2:2; Ps. 103:20; Heb. 2:9)

We believe that . . .

- C. Angels, broadly categorised, are of two types: those that have remained faithful to God and those that have been unfaithful.

(Jude 6; Isa. 14:12–20; Ezk. 28:11–19)

We believe that . . .

D. Angels that have remained faithful have rank.

(*I Thess. 4:16; Jude v. 9*)

We believe that . . .

E. Angels that have remained faithful do work such as watch for repentant souls, keep divine records and guard children. References to the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament are of pre-incarnation appearances of the Lord Jesus.

(*Matt. 18:10; Gen. 18:1; Luke 15:10; Heb. 1:14*)

We believe that . . .

F. Fallen angels are in rebellion against God, and are organized under the direction of Lucifer, also designated as the Wicked One, Serpent, Satan, Devil, Tempter, Beelzebub, etc.

(*Isa. 14:12–17; Ezk. 28:11–19; Rev. 12:8–10*)

We believe that . . .

G. Of the many fallen angels some are in chains, bound by God, awaiting their final judgment. However, many others roam the earth in Satan's service and have the power to possess the bodies of humans and of animals and to afflict through sickness and even with death, those humans who enter into business with Him.

(*II Peter 2:4–6; Jude vs. 5–7*)

We believe that . . .

H. The ultimate end of Satan and all the other fallen angels is eternal torment in the Lake of Fire.

(*Rev. 20:1–10*)

XVIII Satan

We believe that . . .

A. Satan was originally a perfect angelic being created by God, but fell through pride and rebellion. In his fallen state he is still mighty, commander of a host of evil spirit beings, the greatest enemy of God and deceiver of mankind, active in opposition throughout the world. He is the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world, and accuser of believers, attacking persistently with fiery darts of temptation.

(*Job. 1:6, 7, Is. 14:12–17; Eze. 28:11–19; Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 10:18; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 12:3–4*)

We believe that . . .

- B. Satan, by the cross, was judged decisively and so is a defeated foe whom the believer can successfully resist by the putting on of the whole armour of God.

(John 12:31; Eph. 6:11, 12; I Peter 5:8, 9; I John 3:8)

We believe that . . .

- C. Satan, in his current activity, is permitted by God, but that the end of Satan and that of all his followers is eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire.

(Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

XIX. Future Events

We believe that . . .

The events prophesied in the Holy Scriptures that are yet future, identified in chronological order, are these:

- A. **The Rapture of the Church**, which is the sudden calling away from earth to glory of all believers in Christ, those previously dead with those living at the time of the call, together caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

(I Thess. 4:13–17; I Cor. 15:51–56)

- B. **The Commendation of the Saints**, which will take place at the Bema or Judgment Seat of Christ where believers will be rewarded for good works of varying quality.

(II Cor. 5:10; I Cor. 3:13–15, 4:5; Rom. 14:10)

- C. **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**, which will be an occasion of festive joy and pure bliss for the Church, the Bride of Christ.

(Rev. 19:1–8)

- D. **The Tribulation**, which will be a period of unimaginable distress on earth for those left behind after the translation of the Church into glory. The period will last approximately 7 years with the most terrible experiences occurring in the latter 3½ years (commonly called the Great Tribulation). Toward the end, rebellion against God will be widespread but some will be found repentant and be saved.

(Matt. 24:8–22; Rev. 3:10, 6:15–17, 7:14, 9:20–21, 16:9, 11; Dan. 9:27; Jer. 30:7)

- E. **The Second Coming to Earth of Christ**, which will take place immediately after the Great Tribulation, when the Lord Jesus will come to earth in power and with great glory. His appear-

ance shall be initially to a repentant Israel and subsequently to Gentile nations.

(Matt. 24:29, 30; Rev. 19:11–21; Zech. 12:10; II Thess. 1:7–10; Acts 15:14–17)

- F. The Judgment of the Living Nations**, which will be by Jesus as King of the earth who will judge and punish those from among the Gentile nations who have treated harshly a faithful remnant of the Jewish nation. He will suitably reward those sympathetic to the nation Israel.
(Matt. 25:31–46; Rev. 7:9)
- G. The Millennial Reign of Christ on Earth**, which will be a period of a thousand years when the nations of the world will enjoy unprecedented peace and prosperity. Jesus will reign as King of Israel and supreme potentate over all the earth, from David's throne in Jerusalem. The Apostles and all other saints or believers of Christ will reign with Him.
(Rev. 20:3, 4, 9, 10; Is. 9:7, 65:20; Matt. 25:34, 19:28; Luke 19:17; Rom. 8:17, Rev. 5:10; II Tim. 2:12; Matt. 25:23)
- H. The Condemnation of the Resurrected Lost**, which is the final judgment before the Lord Jesus, sitting on the Great White Throne. Every man will be judged in respect to deeds recorded in books which will be opened then, and incidents recalled to refute any defence.
(John 5:22–29; Rev. 20:11–15; Is. 32:1; Dan. 12:2–3)
- I. The Consignment of the Rebellious to the Lake of Fire**, which is the final end of the Devil and his evil hosts as well as all men and women who have rejected God's plan of salvation, all of whom will be cast into the Lake of Fire, a place of conscious, eternal torment.
(Matt. 24:40–51; Rev. 20:10–15)
- J. Eternity**, which will be resumed when time comes to an end, for the old heavens and the old earth will have been destroyed and new ones established. Righteousness will prevail, and the saints will enjoy eternal bliss with Christ.
(Ps. 90:2; Eph. 2:7; II Peter 3:7–13; Is. 65:17; Rev. 21:1)

