

Born of the Spirit

By Steve Bray

No one who is born of God will continue to sin {resist God's known will}, because God's seed {meaning the submissive nature of the Son} remains in him; he cannot go on sinning {living by his own will in rebellion against God's truth}... (1 John 3:9)

Everyone who wants to enter into the true Christian faith must carefully rely on Scripture to define the goal of their faith. *God has made a clear statement: His born again children will no longer go on sinning. If we reject this word from God, we will inevitably form a false understanding of the true gospel message.*

God is able to stop the natural flow of the carnal nature at our own miraculous crossing of the Jordan River into the Promised Land. "The water {of the Jordan River} from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam {picturing a miraculous undoing of what had occurred at the spiritual Fall of mankind}..." (Josh. 3:16)

I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them... Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws... (Ezk. 11:19-20)

God has the power to impart the Son's submissive nature within our eternal soul so we will naturally desire to do the Father's will, regardless of the circumstances or outside pressures. When this new {spiritual} birth occurs, we enter into the undivided kingdom of God. Our Lord is then able to provide the believer with a natural desire to go anywhere, do anything, or be whatever the Spirit moves them to. Once our desire to live for self has been cut off by a supernatural circumcision of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, and our only desire and purpose in life is to manifest the life and work of Jesus Christ at any cost, we can know that we are born of the Spirit.

According to Scripture, this is the one clear sign of the new birth of divine life. No one can enter the {undivided} kingdom of God unless he is born of water {which is the baptism of repentance that is related to spiritual regeneration} and born of the Spirit {which is the baptism that is related to being clothed with Pentecostal power from on high}.

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5 NKJV)

One of the chief characteristics of this new nature is that it desires to go anywhere the Spirit chooses for it to go. In other words, it submits to being led by the Spirit continuously and in all matters. "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone {who has died to self-will and is} born of the Spirit." (John 3:8) *The flesh-life is cut off and the believer is set free from self-will.* Scripture is clear on this matter: "No one who is BORN OF GOD will continue to sin..." (1 John 3:9)

Another sign of this entrance into God's kingdom-life is the way that Christ's teachings, including His Sermon on the Mount become natural to our new nature. "And his commands are not burdensome {when we are participating with Christ in His submissive nature}, for everyone BORN OF GOD overcomes {the willful and self-seeking ways of} the world." (1 John 5:3-4) In this new nature, we are enabled to

naturally follow Paul's example as he followed the example of the Son. (1 Cor. 11:1)
Like Christ, we will live only for the will of the Father in heaven.

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." (John 4:34 NKJV)

"And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." John 8:29 NKJV)

Someone once compared the typical Christian's relationship with God to the way a quarterback directs the front line of a football team. Most people think they are the quarterback and God is the front line. First, they tell God what they have planned to do in their own self-will. Then they send God to clear a path for their ministries, activities, programs and goals. People who live like this have not yet been set free from the willful and self-seeking nature. And until this sinful nature is cut off by a supernatural circumcision of the heart, the believer will find it burdensome to live in the good, pleasing and perfect will of the Father in heaven.

Therefore...offer your bodies as living sacrifices {which requires dying to self-will}, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship... Then you will be able to {be led by the Spirit and} test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom. 12:1-2)

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves {you must give up your own will}, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin {the old willful nature}, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?... But now that you have been set free from sin {your willful nature} and have become slaves to God {by receiving an undivided or purified heart}, the benefit you reap leads to holiness {a life set apart for God's exclusive use}, and the result is {the firstfruits of Christ's} eternal life {"life to the full" – John 10:10}. (Rom. 6:16, 22)

When God's word describes how everyone who is born of God will no longer go on sinning, we do not imply that the born again child of God will never fall into sin. Since we have already covered this subject, we only want to highlight the characteristics of the new nature that does not go on sinning. First, we will begin by looking at our Lord's life when He lived in a mortal body. We know He did not sin. And yet, Jesus did not have perfect knowledge. The Father only revealed sufficient understanding to Jesus to enable Him to complete His assigned work.

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature... (Luke 2:52)

Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. 5:8 NKJV)

Similarly, all the sons of God will be limited in their knowledge and understanding while they remain in this world. However, God will provide His children with sufficient light to walk as Jesus did and carry out the work He has planned for them to do. Sin will only occur when we have refused to respond to God's revealed light.

A willful nature will rebel against many of God's plans. It will also have a desire to seek glory for itself. *Therefore, until we die to our own will and live only for the will of the Father in heaven, we have not entered into a true worship of God. (Rom. 12:1-2)*
Obviously, a willful person will not fulfill their assigned task of bringing all glory to God.

Everyone who is still living for self and self-glory, which includes desiring the honor and praise of men, even while doing many works for the Lord, is still worshiping Satan's way of life.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. MANY will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matt. 7:21-23)

All throughout Scripture the meaning of "evildoer" is related to someone who turns from God's will in order to do their own will. And this can include doing self-willed works

for the Lord. In contrast, everyone who has been born {full born} of God has been set free from this willful nature through the power of the Holy Spirit who imparts the submissive nature of Jesus Christ. The Spirit-empowered children of God are enabled to joyously do the work assigned to them by their Lord.

As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. (John 9:4)

"My food" {or spiritual sustenance}, said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34)

I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. (John 17:4)

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did {by giving up their own will and completing their assigned work}. (1 John 2:6)

For we are God's workmanship, created in {the spiritual image of} Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph. 2:10)

The Father increased the light of the Son's understanding as He grew in stature. And He learned obedience through suffering. Even with limited light, which continued to be increased as He matured, Jesus remained without sin because He did not turn from the Father's revealed will. We too will receive ever-increasing light. We do not enter into sin in the eyes of God until light has been revealed and we have purposely and willfully turned away from His will.

A growth with ever-increasing glory cannot truly begin until we have been taken into the Sabbath-rest of God. The natural flow of our flesh-life must be cut off at our own Jordan River crossing into the Promised Land. When we experience this new birth of the "Spirit of life," we are enabled to rest from our own work through human effort {the source of spiritual weariness and "burnout"} and begin participating with Christ in His life and work.

People who remain in the wilderness testing period are like the first disciples *before* Pentecost. Like the disciples, they may have given up the things of this world and begun following the Spirit of the Lord toward the Promised Land. And some of them remain earnest, like the one hundred and twenty men and women on the day of Pentecost who continued to wait upon the Lord until He came back to manifest His kingdom-life from within their soul. But until this supernatural event occurs in the life of each individual, there will be some part of the old sinful nature that prevents these called out disciples

from entering into the undivided kingdom of God. There is an innate willfulness that prevents a true growth with ever-increasing glory. In other words, Christians can give up everything to follow Jesus and still remain in the desert wilderness. They are still only near the undivided kingdom of God. They may be close, but they are not yet {full} born of the Spirit and freed from the sinful nature. And while they remain in this condition, all they can do is wander around in the arid {spiritual} wilderness, a barren and thirsty place.

When we do not distinguish between the first miraculous work of God, which enables us to escape from the ways of the world, and the second supernatural work, which sets us free from the sinful nature, there will be a natural inclination to try growing into a Christlike nature through a work of the flesh. The first miracle provides the believer with a hunger and thirst to be filled with the life of Jesus Christ; the second miracle fills the temple of our body with His life of love. If Paul were alive he would still be asking:

Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit {the first miraculous work and a past event}, are you now trying to attain your goal {the second supernatural work of being filled with the Spirit} by human effort. (Gal. 3:3)

No one will ever be filled with Christ's life of true righteousness while attempting to obey laws through human effort. It is a blessing from God that only occurs after our self-sufficient spirit has been broken. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:3) "Blessed {by God} are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matt. 5:6) The wilderness testing period has only one purpose: God takes the believer into this arid land to break their self-sufficient spirit and strip away all of their heart idols. He knows that He cannot perfect His power within their inner being while their flesh-life remains strong. There is no hope of being saved with the saving life of Jesus Christ while one clings to their self-sufficiency. And yet, every Christian begins their spiritual pilgrimage in their own sufficiency. But no amount of striving, struggling, resolutions or determined resolve has the capacity to bring Christ's life of true righteousness into one's soul. While all of these human exertions have their time and place in the wilderness time of testing, it is not until we are brought to a place of pure faith, and stripped of ALL hope of being able to please God through our own efforts, that we are able to become "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4)

True growth in the Christlike nature cannot really begin until we leave the way of trying to obey God's laws through human effort to make ourselves righteous, and learn to walk in the Spirit – BY FAITH. John the Baptist was a desert preacher. He was only able to call people out from the ways of the world through the teachings of repentance and obedience to law. However, no one will ever escape the arid desert wilderness while they are following desert preachers who only know the way of human effort. No one will escape the bondage of the sinful nature through law. They will need pastors and teachers who have gone into the Sabbath-rest of God, and, like Joshua and Caleb, can show them samples of the supernatural fruit of the land. Believers must be built up in their faith so they are willing to die to self and submit themselves to a life wholly led by the Spirit. They will need to earnestly seek out the baptism with the Spirit that enables them to be set free from their willful nature before they can "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13)

Desert preachers can help people clean up the outside of their lives, but the inner nature will remain corrupt. While John the Baptist may have been the greatest prophet

who had ever lived up until his time (Matt. 11:11), he was not able to take anyone past a repentant faith with its wilderness experience. It would take One who was able to baptize with the Holy Spirit to enable the called out children of God to truly enter into the undivided kingdom of God and manifest His kingdom-life. John the Baptist said, “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Matt. 3:11)

People who remain in the wilderness testing period will find themselves going around and around in circles year after year. They are following desert preachers, who like Moses, are trying to make the Living Water flow from the rock of Christ by human effort. And God cannot permit them to leave the desert. No flesh will glory in His presence. (1 Cor. 1:29 KJV) Like Moses, they will have to wait until physical death to receive the long awaited promise of divine life from Jesus Christ. People who follow the path of human effort will never grow into the divine nature of Jesus Christ. In fact, as the years go by, they become less spiritual. They gradually wear down because it is too hard for the flesh to continue trying to be Christlike in nature when it does not have the capacity to do so. So they change the doctrine of grace into a license to go on living in sin {living in their own sufficiency by their own will and desires and outside of Christ’s self-sacrificing agape love – the eternal life}. Now we can see why it is so important to seek out a purified heart from the Lord. *Until this undivided kingdom is established in our heart, our flesh-life will continue to fight against a life of holiness to the Lord.*

Many people have had the Spirit breathed into their soul. They sense a degree of peace with God when they are not in rebellion against His known will for their lives. But they still know in their heart that they are not yet sharing with Christ in His submissive nature. While these believers have been impregnated with the life of Jesus Christ {spiritual “conception”} (1 John 3:9), they still have not given birth to His divine nature. There is a need to press forward in their faith until the birth of His life actually takes place.

Again, we want to make the earnest seeker aware of the soul suffering that will take place in giving birth to the life of Jesus Christ. Many do not persevere because they do not like the experience of going through this refining process. And when the fires are heated up and there are no spiritual Christians to show them a reason for pressing forward to enter into the Promised Land, many turn back to the ways of the world. For those who truly desire to have their heart purified and enter into the divine life of Jesus Christ, always keep in mind the goal of your faith. *Even though there will be considerable suffering involved in giving birth to Christ’s nature, when the birth takes place, all the soul-suffering will be replaced by a joy that no one can take away.*

I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again {as an inner revelation of divine life} and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. (John 16:20-22)

Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me {as a revelation of “the divine nature” in your heart}. Because I live, you also will live {in the same life}. On that day you will realize that...I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves

me...and I too will love him and show myself to him {“manifest Myself to him” – NKJV}. (John 14:19-21)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil {and his willful way of life}...Come near to God and he will come near to you... grieve, mourn and wail. Change your {worldly} laughter to mourning and your {carnal} joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up {into the Sabbath-rest of divine life in due time}. (Jam. 4:7-10)

Lord, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them they could barely whisper a prayer. As a woman with child and about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, O Lord. We were with child, we writhed in pain, but we gave birth to wind {meaning the Spirit of life}... (Isa. 26:16-18)

You should not be surprised at my saying, “You must be born again.” (John 3:7)

The distinction between being impregnated with the seed of Christ’s life and giving birth to Christ’s divine nature has generally not been clarified or distinguished by the teaching of the Church down through the ages. We have neglected to examine God’s work in His natural creation to help us understand His spiritual principles. (Rom. 1:20) His natural order in nature will help us understand how the actual birth of a new creature does not take place when conception occurs. Birth can never take place when the new life is first conceived in the womb.

In this same way, God’s word also distinguishes between conception and the new {spiritual} birth. In the spiritual realm, our spiritual regeneration is the same as conception. The Holy Spirit overshadows our life and impregnates us with the seed of Christ’s life. (1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 3:9) We are blessed with a hunger and thirst to be like Jesus Christ. *And as long as we are seeking out the fullness of His life, we will remain justified. But this is not the goal of our faith. We are blessed with a hunger so we will seek to be filled with Christ’s life of true righteousness and holiness. In other words, we must go forward in our faith if we hope to be born again with Christ’s divine nature.*

There have been many “pregnant” Christians who never did give birth to Christ’s life and nature while they remained in this world. While some ended up having still births and going back to the world, others were like the Old Testament saints who suffered on in their faith without receiving the promise until they physically died. God used Moses as an example of this kind of Christian experience. Moses was not permitted to leave the desert wilderness because he attempted to make the Living Water flow from the rock of Christ by human effort. He struck the rock twice, representing the two of division and man’s way of human effort instead of relying on faith.

The same condition exists today. The reason why we are not able to see the light of Christ’s life and nature in the world is because we have many “pregnant” Christians who are still living by human effort. Their desire to cling to their willfulness and self-centeredness is preventing them from giving birth to the self-sacrificing life and nature of Jesus Christ. Even those who have become full-time ministers are still living for their own plans, their own benefit, and their own glory. And so they remain under a bondage to the flesh-life.

Much of the problem is related to the teachings in the church. Some new Christians are being taught the way of law {human effort through human energy and zeal}, which

keeps them in bondage to their flesh-life. Many others are being taught not to expect to be set free from their sinful nature in this world. By the time they become long-time Christians, they are thoroughly indoctrinated with this UNBELIEF. And of course, their ongoing bondage to the sinful nature naturally perpetuates this doctrine of unbelief. The new believers, who come into the church and start out with a real hunger and thirst to be like Christ, are gradually beaten down with this unbelief until they too put out the Spirit's fire and begin teaching the same unbelief to the next generation of incoming Christians. *But now you will never again have an excuse for persisting in your unbelief. The word of God has clearly established Christ's life of true righteousness and holiness as the goal of the true Christian faith.*

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:22-24)

Tremble, you complacent women; shudder, you daughters who feel secure {in your supposed eternal security}! Strip off your clothes {all your self-sufficient pride}, put sackcloth around your waists {with a broken and contrite spirit as you seek the presence of the Lord}...till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest... The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence {within the soul} forever. (Isa. 32:11, 15, 17)

Growing With Ever Increasing Glory

True growth in the glory or spiritual image of Christ will not begin until we have been lifted into the Sabbath-rest of God, where everyone rests from the work that comes from self-will. Before the baptism with the Holy Spirit takes place, there will remain a natural antagonism within our nature against God's requirements of holiness. And if we are fighting against holiness, we will never grow with ever-increasing glory into the likeness of our glorified Lord. "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the {indwelling presence of the} Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

The desert wilderness is intended to be a time of putting off the old way of life. We are to come out from the ways of the world and touch no unclean thing. We are to put off the old self and its deceitful desires. We also must allow our mind to be renewed as we turn from the self-directed way of life to the Spirit-controlled way of life. In this process, God will be bringing us to the end of our self-sufficiency, because only in perfect weakness are we able to perfect the power of God in our lives, "for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9) Only then are we able to begin putting on the "new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4:24)

What we are saying is that all growth in glory, which is growth in the divine nature, takes place in the Sabbath-rest of God, where everyone rests from man's way of human effort. When the Author and Perfecter of our faith has accomplished His work of entire sanctification {the circumcision or "cutting off" of the flesh-life}, we are enabled to live wholly by faith in God.

"...circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit..." (Rom. 2:29)

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands {supernaturally by the Spirit}, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh... (Col. 2:11)

This is the land of superabundant fruitfulness. The Lord's supernaturally imparted "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" will begin to flow naturally from our new nature. The "light of life," which has its source in the life of God, is infinite in relationship to our finite world. So once we are born of the Spirit with our willful nature cut off, we can know there is no limit to how much we can grow in the glory of the Lord.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is {in power}, there is freedom {from the sinful nature}. And we, who...all reflect the Lord's glory {meaning His spiritual image}, are being transformed into his likeness, with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:17-18)

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect {in the life of the glorified Lord}, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. (Phil. 3:12)

The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple {as a continuous river of divine life}... As the man went eastward...he measured off a thousand cubits {which relates to God's perfect order} and then led me through water that was ankle deep. He measured off another thousand

cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the {living} water had risen and was deep enough to swim in – a river {of life} that no one could cross {back over into the world – Praise the dear Lord Jesus! This is the level of divine life that provides the only true eternal security.}...Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows... Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water {of divine life} from the sanctuary flows to them... (Ezk. 47:1, 3-5, 9, 12)

The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring WHOSE WATERS NEVER FAIL...then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will CAUSE YOU TO RIDE ON THE HEIGHTS OF THE LAND AND TO FEAST ON THE INHERITANCE {which is the firstfruits of the eternal life}... (Isa. 58:11, 14)

...Whoever drinks the water I give him will NEVER THIRST. Indeed, the water I give him will become IN HIM A SPRING OF WATER WELLING UP to {the firstfruits of Christ's} eternal life. (John 4:14)

...If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me {which implies following Christ through the cross}, as the Scripture said, "FROM HIS INNERMOST BEING WILL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER." (John 7:37-38 NASB)

Jesus did not come to merely offer us right doctrines to agree with in our mind. He came to give His life to us. We are to believe in Him with the kind of faith that seeks out a union with His divine life and nature. He is the gate into both the "Feast of Firstfruits" and the "Feast of Ingathering." We are to receive the firstfruits of His eternal life in this world, and the whole harvest of His life when we receive our glorified bodies.

But we cannot gain access to the rivers of living water, which are waiting to flow through our inner being by the power of the Holy Spirit, if we do not die to self and enter into the firstfruits of the eternal life through Christ's life. As the Scripture said, when we are drinking of His Living Water, we will never thirst again. He is able to satisfy our soul because His river of divine life comes directly from the throne of God in the heavenly realms. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in {the life of} Christ." (Eph. 1:3) We are now able to feast on the firstfruits of the life we will experience throughout all eternity.

Are you still relying on a right belief in mere words and doctrines? If you are, it is time to turn from your religion to a faith that actively seeks out the life and nature of Jesus Christ! We are not questioning your belief in Jesus. But have you ever believed in the one Lord who is able to produce rivers of Living Water from within your eternal soul and keep you from ever thirsting again?! "According to your faith will it be done to you." (Matt. 9:29)

Have you become a fountain of divine life or are you still attempting to carry your Christianity around by human effort while believing the words in a Book? There are lots of people who think they know the word of God, and there are a few who have become great scholars of the Bible, but most of them have never turned to the Lord in childlike humility and truly depended on Him to turn them into a vessel of His ever-flowing river of divine life. Remember, the goal of our faith is to become a lamp that manifests the light of His life and nature in this world.

You diligently study the Scriptures because YOU THINK {in error} THAT BY THEM YOU POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me {through the cross and a death to your self-life} to have {my divine} life. (John 5:39-40)

...I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me {through a death to self on the cross} will NEVER walk in {carnal} darkness, but will have the light of {divine} life. (John 8:12)

The apostle John described the never-ending river of life that is to flow from the throne of God through our soul as a work of the Holy Spirit. (John 7:37-39) In other words, this river of Life is made up of the fruit of His Spirit. There should never be a moment when we are not filled to overflowing with Christ's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The fruit of the Spirit is a result of Christ's life being manifest within our eternal soul. It is no longer a burden to walk as Jesus did when His living water is continuously flowing out of our new nature. And for this reason, where the supernatural fruit of the Spirit flows like a river, there is no need for law. We should, however, understand that our entrance into the Lord's kingdom-life through the new birth only begins as an ankle deep river. But, as we grow with ever-increasing glory, the river will eventually become so deep that it will sweep us away into the eternal life of the Lord.

I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs...so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it {into a whole new being}. (Isa. 41:18, 20)

And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that {new} Way {Spirit-led and Spirit-controlled}... They will enter Zion {into the presence of the Lord} with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. (Isa. 35:8, 10)

But now that you have been set free from sin {the self-willed nature} and have become slaves to God {through the new birth into the Spirit-filled life}, the benefit you reap leads to holiness {of heart and life}, and the result is {the presence of Christ's} eternal life. (Rom. 6:22)

God did not lie or distort the truth when He said, "I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land {of Sabbath-rest}... I will SAVE YOU FROM ALL YOUR UNCLEANNESS." (Eze. 36:27-29) God does not give false promises. This is the long awaited "Promise of the Father." He poured out this Living Water for the first time on the day of Pentecost. SUDDENLY,

in a moment of time, all the disciples who had received this baptism were changed in nature. While they had already given up everything to follow their Lord, they still needed to be clothed with power in order to be united with the submissiveness of Christ's nature. They truly entered into the Feast of Firstfruits. It was not spiritual regeneration, but rather an entrance into the firstfruits of Christ's eternal life.

We should not be shocked when we hear this gospel message. The preordained plan of God was to have many sons who would walk in the spiritual image of the firstborn {and prototype} Son, being conformed to His likeness. (Rom. 8:29) As promised, the glorified Lord came to manifest the firstfruits of His eternal life from within each of His disciples on the Day of Pentecost. In this way they were enabled to "walk as Jesus did." (1 John 2:5-6)

As we said before, Jesus did not come merely to teach doctrines for us to believe in our heads. He came to provide each of His consecrated disciples with a new life from heaven and enable them to have His same mind and thought processes. He wanted us to understand God's perspective in all matters of life. Furthermore, this new life in the Promised Land is intended to satisfy our soul as with the "richest of foods." (Ps. 63:5) When all of our spiritual needs are met by the indwelling life of the Lord, the arrows from this world will no longer be able to reach into our soul. We will then be able to say with Paul, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation... I can do everything through him who gives me strength." (Phil. 4:12-13)

Remember the time when Paul and Silas were locked in a prison cell in the middle of the night after a very "hectic" day? They had been whipped until their backs were nothing but open wounds and blood. Not only were they tortured, but it happened to them as innocent men. You might say their "rights" were extremely violated. But in spite of all this trouble, we find them singing praises to their Lord and worshipping the glory of their God. In contrast, many Christians today have a difficult time finding joy in their scheduled worship services whenever the worship team doesn't put together a really good hour of entertainment. And if someone has merely said something bad about them, or maybe even cuts them off in traffic on the way home from their worship service, they find it impossible to sing praises to their Lord with true joy from the heart.

The difference between Paul and most Christians today is related to the covenant they are living under. Everyone who is still living by human effort is still living under Old Testament principles. It is easy to know this because they have not gone any farther in the faith than to begin waiting until physical death to enter into the glorious life of their Lord. When Christians do not enter into the ever-flowing river of Christ's divine life, they must live by their carnal emotions on a moment by moment basis. This carnal way of life will be greatly influenced by their current circumstances. Consequently, their Christianity is only as good as the current conditions surrounding their life. Paul and Silas were living under the new covenant way of life. They had a supernatural river of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control continuously flowing from within their new nature. They did not have to struggle to produce this Christlike life. It naturally flowed out of them regardless of their temporal circumstances. *The explanation is simple: Everyone born of God overcomes the world and shares with Christ in His life and nature in the heavenly realms.*

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with {resurrection} power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ

{with His divine nature} may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you...may have power, together with all the saints...to know this {supernatural agape} love that surpasses knowledge {which means it cannot be taught by human wisdom} – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his {resurrection} power that is at work within us, to him be {the} glory... (Eph. 3:16-21)

The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him {by a supernatural work of God’s grace}. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him **MUST WALK AS JESUS DID.** (1 John 2:4-6)

In this way, {selfless agape} love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, **BECAUSE IN THIS WORLD WE ARE LIKE HIM.** (1 John 4:17)

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of {supernatural, self-sacrificing agape} love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph. 5:1-2)

Appendix – A

Salvation Examined

God planned from the beginning to have human children who manifested His image of holy love in this world. Adam was created with this divine image. But his fall into sin separated both himself and his lineage from the eternal life of God. The purpose of salvation is to restore this lost image. To help clarify what needs to take place in the part of salvation that needs to take place in this world, we will examine its various stages and processes. {Scriptures quoted are from the NKJV unless noted otherwise}

A. The Goal of Salvation

Jer 2:11-13

11 "...But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit. 12 Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; Be very desolate," says the Lord. 13 "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water."

1. Man was created to be a vessel of God's Glory. The glory is the eternal life that reveals God's image of holy love.
2. Man separated himself from God's Glory—the eternal life—when he turned from God to the world to find an earthly form of spiritual life. These two evils encompass all evil.
3. The life that comes from this world is not everlasting. It continues to run out of the soul like water out of a cracked cistern. It is the reason why people experience spiritual dryness.

John 4:14 NIV

14 "But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

1. The Son came for the specific purpose of giving everyone access to the glory that Adam lost. "I have given them the glory that you gave me...in order that the {perfect} love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (John 17:22, 26 NIV)
2. Christians who are being taken through the wilderness testing period only experience wells of refreshment from the Lord's Living Water. Those who find the Lord's full salvation, where there is an endless supply of Living Water, "never thirst." They live beyond the arid desert.
3. It requires an endless flow of Living Water to produce a consistent display of the eternal life.

John 7:37-39

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture

has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” 9 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given {in the fullness of the eternal life}, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Eph 4:10

10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.

1. Christ could not fill the temple of the body with His glory until after He was glorified.
2. The glory restored is directly related to the “fountain of living waters” that Adam lost.
3. To experience the “rivers” of living water flowing through the soul, one must completely turn from the world and its sources of spiritual sustenance—the original cause of Adam’s fall.

Eph 1:3-4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Col 3:1-2

1 If then you were raised with Christ {the Spirit having been “breathed” into you after a miraculous crossing of the Red Sea}, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

1. Christ has perfected the eternal Kingdom-life in bodily form. (Col 2:9-10) Every blessing needed to manifest this divine life is now available in Christ within the heavenly realms.
2. God planned from the beginning to have His children live through the Son of Man and share with Him in His eternal life of holy love. But the life is not available to those who are still attempting to find their life from this world. (Phil. 3:18-20)
3. We must turn from the world and seek out the eternal Kingdom-life that comes from above. “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after {because they don’t have faith in God}, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have {the heart idols that bind you to this world} and give alms’ provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail... (Luke 12:29-33)

Eph 3:17, 19

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you {may}... 19 know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

1 John 4:17

4 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

1. Christians are expected to seek out the Kingdom-life that comes from above. Those who truly learn to live through Jesus and find their life from Him will be filled with God's eternal life.
2. Full salvation restores God's image of perfect love. This full salvation needs to be received in this world if we hope to stand before Him with "boldness in the day of judgment."

B. Reconciliation through the Blood

Mark 1:4-5

4 John {the Baptist while under the Old Testament dispensation} came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

1. God has always had a means to forgive sins. He was able to forgive men like Enoch by looking at "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8)
2. Anyone who turned to God and submitted to Him according to the light available in their generation received remission of sins.

Rom 5:10-11

10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

1. We are reconciled to God through the Son's shed blood. But this is not His full salvation.
2. In this New Testament age of fulfillment, God has purposed to make us partakers with Him in His eternal life of holy love. This "much more" of salvation is how He actually saves us from our fallen nature.

1 John 2:12

12 I have written to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake.

1. The apostle John speaks of little children, young men and Fathers when speaking of three different stages of salvation. The little children have turned to the Lord and trusted in Him to forgive their sins.
2. In the Old Testament type, the Jews first came under the protection of the blood while still in Egypt. The Jewish people were "passed over" when they put the blood on the door frame. But even with this elementary and justifying faith in God, they were still slaves in Egypt.

John 8:34-36

34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

1. The “slaves” are permitted to enter into the household of God. But they cannot abide in the house forever in this state. The slaves are those who are still attempting to live by law through their own human efforts. They have not yet come to the place where they are “delivered from the law” so they may “serve in the newness of the Spirit.” (Rom. 7:6)
2. John Wesley served God in this legal state of spiritual bondage for a number of years. He believed in God, trusted in Christ’s shed blood for the forgiveness of his sins, submitted to the laws of God, prayed to God and served the Lord as best he knew how. But he did not come into “the newness of the Spirit” until his Aldersgate conversion.
3. Those who live in this state will find themselves stumbling into sin and confessing on a regular basis. As long as they do not choose to live in sin, they can receive forgiveness through confession. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Acts 10:22, 30, 34

22 They said, “Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation...” 30 So Cornelius said, “...a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God...’” ...34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him...”

1. We must not reject the “little children” who are attempting to serve the Lord as best they know how with their limited light. Even though it is clear they have not yet discovered how to enter into a Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered way of life, God accepts them if they fear Him and are attempting to serve Him.
2. Many people are in this state. Even though they are living by God’s laws, they feel like they are still slaves to their own desires. It is the reason they keep going forward for “relief” when they are brought under conviction from strong preaching. The Spirit is with them and they are clean in God’s sight (see John 13:10; 14:16, 17), but the Comforter has not come with His deep peace to dwell in their heart and to completely cleanse their conscience. (Heb. 9:14)
3. We should again note that slaves will not remain in the household forever. The old self-seeking and self-exalting nature—carnality—still has too much power to hold it back through human effort forever. Unless they have Wesley’s discipline, the spirit of the world will eventually turn their heart from the ways of God.
4. Many of those who have had strong convictions to follow the Lord have hardened their hearts against the light of truth as revealed by Jesus. They may still be religious and in the church, but they are now living for self and the pleasures of this world. “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ {rejecting His way of dying to self}: whose end is destruction...who set their mind on earthly things.” (Phil. 3:18-19)

C. Walking in the Newness of the Spirit

Rom 6:3-11

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin... 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. When Paul says that Jesus died to “sin” once for all, it means that He went all the way to the cross in dying to self-will. He never did anything out from Himself in His own will. His whole life was given up to being led by the Spirit. And by following this course all the way through the cross, He perfected the eternal Kingdom-life in bodily form.
2. God gave baptism to the church as a means to symbolize the necessity of dying to the old self-willed way of life. It is intended to help the new believer—the slave under law—consciously acknowledge his choice to die to self-will. He chooses to seek to be led by the Spirit in all matters. The Spirit comes to dwell within the heart of those who make this choice. Having died to sin {self-will}, those who are born of the Spirit walk in the newness of the Spirit.

1 John 3:8-9

8 He who sins {chooses to live in sin} is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin {go on resisting the teachings in God’s Word}, for His seed remains in him {which gives him a desire to submit to God}; and he cannot sin {live by his own will in rebellion against God’s truth}, because he has been born of God.

1. The devil chose to live by his own will and to seek his own honor. He wanted to have an independent life. It would enable him to direct his own steps and exalt himself through his own works. This self-seeking and self-exalting form of life is the essence of sin.
2. The devil persuaded man to follow his self-directed way of life. It resulted in a world filled with people who think they are their own gods. It leads them to take charge of their life and direct their steps according to their own desires. “This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic {of the devil}. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” (Jam. 3:15) This self-seeking way of life is what leads to wrath and separation from the Presence of God. “God...will render to each one according to his deeds...to those who are self-seeking...and do not obey the truth {as revealed through the life of Jesus}...indignation and wrath.” (Rom. 2:5-8)

3. Those who are born of God stop living for self. They have chosen to go down into the watery grave and die to self-will so they may be led by the Spirit according to the Lord's will. "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him..." (2 Cor. 5:14-15)

1 John 5:3-4

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome {when the submissive nature of the Son is in us}. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.

1. When the Spirit comes to dwell in the heart, He brings with Him the divine nature of Jesus. The life of Christ's Spirit is naturally in harmony with God and His ways. He comes to put within the heart a real desire to live for God and His purposes.
2. Those who overcome the world and its self-seeking way of life are set apart to live for God. They are "sanctified." They experience a real victory over the sin of self-will.

1 John 2:14

14 ...I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

1. The miraculous crossing of the Red Sea represents the point of salvation when God's children enter into a Spirit-directed way of life. After being passed over in Egypt, they are driven out in fear under law. A person will die in their sins if they then choose to stay in the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of Egypt, even though they were once forgiven. It was because John Wesley continued to serve God in fear in his legal state that he remained justified.
2. Because the miracle at the Red Sea represents the place where the Spirit comes to dwell in the heart, the motivation to move forward is changed from fear under law to an inward "hunger and thirst after righteousness." (Matt. 5:6) This supernatural blessing identifies the point where the believer enters into the desert testing period.
3. Those who have overcome the self-directed ways of the devil and have entered into this Spirit-directed way of life will experience "dry spells" mixed with periodic "wells of refreshment." These times of refreshing are referred to as "the touches of the Lord." While this "living water" is necessary to keep advancing, it falls short of Christ's endless rivers of living water.
4. Christians with a "hunger and thirst for righteousness" naturally love to read their Bibles. Being highly motivated, these overcomers press the "little children" to spend more time with the Word. They know how this "manna" is able to sustain the soul in the desert.

Rom 8:12-17

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are

sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

1. Those who have overcome the world are free to live by the Spirit. They no longer experience the bondage of fear that comes from trying to live by law.
2. Christians who have the Spirit dwelling within them do not need to respond to the desires of the flesh. But that does not mean the devil cannot tempt them. The wilderness is where the devil comes with his full arsenal in an attempt to turn these new Spirit-directed children of God back to the self-seeking ways of the world. And many of them fall from God as Adam did. “For if you live according to the flesh {after receiving the Spirit}, you will die.” (v. 13)
3. Those who respond to the desires of the flesh will naturally manifest the works of the flesh. Some of the works of a self-willed way of life include “contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath {selfish anger}, selfish ambitions, dissensions.” (Gal. 5:20) Paul says that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (v. 21) These carnal traits are in conflict with Christ’s light of life. People die to the Spirit when they choose to yield to them.
4. The wilderness testing period is the time when Christians are expected to “put to death” every carnal trait. There must be a much deeper dying to everything that is self-originated before there is complete freedom from these subtle forms of carnality. There needs to be a looking to Christ to come in the power of His endless life so that the heart can be perfected in love. (Heb. 7:16, 19) Only in this way is it possible to completely overcome all these carnal traits.

1 Peter 5:6, 10

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time... 10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

1. The full salvation that perfects and establishes the heart in holy love is not a work that man does. Even if we could memorize every Scripture verse and committed ourselves to conform to every requirement with the greatest of zeal, we would still fall short of God’s standard. God intends to manifest His eternal glory—His life of perfect love—through each of our lives.
2. Born again Christians {“born of water” – John 3:5, and with the Spirit breathed into them – John 20:22, which gives one a hunger and thirst to be like Jesus}, having overcome the hold of the world, are expected to seek to enter into the Son’s eternal Kingdom-life. Because they possess the Spirit, they have the capacity to prepare the temple of their body according to God’s specifications. When the work is done, and the body is presented to God without any reservations, the Lord will fill it with His glory. It is the Living Word dwelling within the temple that makes it possible to live as God requires.

Matt 5:39-48

39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away... 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven... 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

1. The children of God's Kingdom live by the Spirit rather than by "law". These commands that describe the character of "life" in the Kingdom of God need to be obeyed. But they cannot be fulfilled when we try to conform to them as laws. Jesus has purposed to make this way of life an innate part of our inner nature. By establishing His eternal Kingdom-life within our heart, He enables us to respond to every situation with the Father's perfect love. We then have a nature that naturally fulfills all of His "righteous requirements."
2. The way of law had to be annulled because it could not make anyone perfect in holy love. (Heb. 7:18-19) "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son {in the power of an endless life} ...that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled {fully met – NIV} in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (Rom. 8:3-4)

1 Thess. 5:16-18

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Phil. 4:4-7

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

1. The fully sanctified believer, because his life comes directly from God, will have a nature that naturally responds to these commands. "For the kingdom of God...is righteousness {the natural ability to fulfill God's righteous requirements} and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17)
2. God expects His children to submit to all truth in the time of testing. There must be a submission even when carnal tendencies without the heart are resisting the truth. God has only promised to lift those who obey Him into the Son's life of holy love. (1 Pet. 5:6) "He who has My commandments and keeps them {in the time of testing}, it is he who love Me...and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." (John 14:21)
3. We can determine if our heart has been entirely separated from the world by the way we react when our rights are violated. Those who are fully sanctified have become like the Lamb of God on the way to the cross. Having given up all rights to themselves, they permit the Sovereign God to do whatever He pleases. Have you been enabled to "joyfully accept the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven"? (Heb. 10:34) It reflects a sanctified heart.

4. The only reason people experience a sense of loss when their goods are plundered is because they were idols of the heart. Whenever a loss causes a void in the heart, you can know that it was the loss of an idol. When everything has truly been surrendered to God so that He is able to become All in All, there is never a void in the heart, regardless of our losses in this world.
5. “Rejoice in the Lord always... Be anxious for nothing...” It is not possible to obey these commands from the heart without first finding an abundant entrance into God’s everlasting kingdom where the Lord reigns sovereignly within the heart. Until every heart idol has been given over to God and there are no personal possessions left that have a hold on our heart, it is only natural to become anxious and upset when these things are threatened or taken away.

D. Living in the Eternal Kingdom-Life

Col 3:1-3

1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

1. Even though the born again child of God {those who have miraculously passed through the Red Sea and now have a hunger and thirst to be like their Lord} is free to live for God’s will alone, his heart will still have attachments to this world. These earthly things will be used for spiritual support {we use them to give ourselves a “lift”}. The wilderness-testing period is where each of these idols must be removed from the heart. God must destroy the old life that attempts to find life from the world through independence and self-sufficiency. Until there has been a complete conversion to childlike dependence upon God for everything, it is not possible to enter into His eternal Kingdom-life. (Matt. 18:3)
2. We are raised up through the new birth {when the Spirit is first breathed into us}. It provides an opportunity to take our minds off of earthly things and to look for the supernatural life that comes from God. Every weight from this world must be surrendered before our spirit is able to rise into the heavenly realms. God will only provide an abundant entrance into His heavenly life when we have let go of every “unclean thing.” The unclean thing in His sight is everything that is not wholly given over to Him. It also requires a complete surrender to holy love. “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure...for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:10-11)

1 John 2:14

14 I have written to you, Fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

1. To know God is to know His eternal life of holy love. His presence within our soul makes our nature like that found in Jesus when He revealed Himself as the Lamb of God. It is a nature that naturally sacrifices itself and everything it has for

- the good of God's eternal kingdom. It is a heart free from attachments to this world and filled to its capacity with the eternal life.
2. The Son came specifically to enable God's children to share with Him in His eternal life. "And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life." (1 John 2:25) "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (1 John 5:11)
 3. It is not possible to share with God in the eternal life while still attempting to find our life from this world. Adam lost the eternal life by taking this worldly course. God will perfect the heart in holy love when there has been a real letting go of everything from this world.

1 Thess 5:23-24

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

1. God has purposed to take complete possession of our spirit, soul and body. When Adam was first created in God's image, the Holy Spirit was at the control center of his life. The Spirit worked through Adam's spirit to keep the soul and body under the complete dominion of God. But when Adam turned to self-will {chose to be god of his own life}—the essence of sin—he separated himself from the Spirit of God. The Lord cannot "dwell in" and "walk in" someone when they are directing their own steps. At that point the soul, with its emotional needs, and the body, with its physical needs, began to control the activities of man. He now lives in a self-originated form of life that is moved by personal desires. This is the body of sin.
2. God has purposed to restore the lost image by filling the temple with His glory. Once man has chosen to let go of all control over his life and surrender his every possession to God, the Lord will make His eternal life known within the heart. The endless flow of His "rivers" of Living Water is what completely satisfies the soul. Whoever has this life will "never thirst" for the things of this world. They begin to share with Christ in every spiritual blessing found in His heavenly life. (Eph. 1:3) "But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14)

John 14:18-21

18 ...I will come to you. 19 A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.

1. The key to a full salvation of the soul in this world is in this belief that Christ intends to manifest His life of holy love within us today. "Then the nations {of this world} will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes." (Ezk. 36:23) "According to your faith it will be done to you." (Matt. 9:29)

2. We must not overlook and put off as a future salvation that is received after we leave this world, the divine life that is now available to everyone who will press into the Kingdom-life of promise and live through Christ. (1 John 4:9)
3. There is a lifting in due time after we have proven our willingness to fully submit to the leading of the Spirit through the wilderness testing period. “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time... but may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” (1 Pet. 5:6, 10)

1 Peter 1:6-16

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow... 13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

1. Christ has promised to show Himself holy through us. This divine life of holiness was to be revealed to the nations in this world. Those who follow Him through the cross will be filled with His “light of life.” (John 8:12) The life is received after dying to the world and its ways.
2. Trials prove the genuineness of our purpose to serve the Lord both today and through eternity. Life in the eternal kingdom of God is reserved for those who have proven their faith in this world. These true children of faith hold onto the promises and continue to submit, even when they are not yet sharing with Christ in His eternal life.
3. Christians are therefore required to stop living by their own desires and to soberly press into the eternal Kingdom-life. “The law and the prophets were until John {the Baptist}. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.” (Luke 16:16)

James 1:2-4, 12

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing... Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

1. The crown of life is held for us in heaven. But this never fading life can now be communicated to those who enter the life of promise. It always comes after a period of trials {the wilderness time of testing}. The trials are intended to take away our independent and self-sufficient spirit. Only by living as dependent and trusting little children can we be “perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”
2. Even though the believer is required to step out in faith, living in all revealed light, it is the Sovereign God who chooses when He will reveal the eternal life within the soul. After girding up your mind to reject the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of this world, you are to “rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” He will come to you to reveal Himself within your soul as “rivers” of Living Water.

Heb. 10:35-39

35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 “For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

1. The Lord has promised to manifest Himself to those who obey Him. (John 14:21) We must not fall short of this great salvation. While there is a time of preparation we must rest in, we can also know that an ongoing experience of dryness in the wilderness is a sign of unbelief. There has been a lack of response in some area. There is still an idol in the heart. “And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” (Heb. 3:18-19)
2. Daniel Steele has provided some excellent advise to those who have given themselves and everything they possess to the Lord but have not yet been taken into the “Life of Promise” – the “Promise of the Father.” (Acts: 1:4)

“Keep on believing the promise, and insisting that God is true. He may delay for days and weeks the declaration of your complete acceptance in order to develop and test your faith. The longer the delay, if you trust unwaveringly, the more marvelous the manifestation of Christ to your soul as your complete Saviour when the Comforter takes the things of Christ and shows them unto you. The Syrophenician woman lost nothing by pressing her suit against chilling discouragements. Faint not. Just here thousands have failed. They did not grasp the prize because they did not persistently believe. Others fail through a subtle legality. They trust in their consecration and not in Jesus only. They take a commercial view of the matter and present the offering of their hearts as the meritorious ground of receiving the fullness of the Spirit. This is a piece of folly and presumption... Others fail because of their seeking the gift [an experience], and not the Giver [the eternal life of holy love]. You must desire Jesus only [and all that He is]. You must pray this prayer: “Lord Jesus, glorify Thyself in me.” When you are seeking for some delicious ecstasy you are not seeking to glorify Christ... There must be an absolute resignation of self and selfish desires in order to be a perfect believer...”

Appendix – B

Living Above the World

[Because “worldliness” – living by the ways of, and for the enjoyments and pleasures of the temporal realm – seems to be rampant and unchecked in the church today, we felt it necessary to include this chapter from the book – *Living In the Heavenly Realms* – also written by Steve Bray, to help explain what is implied in the biblical definition of worldliness. Scriptures used in this lesson are from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise]

There can be no spiritual progress in the life of heaven while Christians are still living by the ways of this world. The Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world are diametrically opposed to each other. Even though Christians remain in the world to spread the gospel of the kingdom of God, they are not of this world. Those who follow the ways of this world are literally making themselves an “enemy of God.”

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (Jam. 4:4)

The words of God are often drastic and severe. There is an irrevocable finality in what He says about being a friend of this world. This fact provides a real reason for being fearful of worldly behavior. We cannot afford to be deceived. The only hope we have of entering into the heavenly realms is to learn what He means by this truth.

Worldly behavior does not appear to the multitude to be wrong. But the apostle Paul has provided a list of the kinds of behavior that must be avoided. You may want to write them down. You cannot be lifted into the spiritual life of heaven while doing these things.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud... headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure {in this world} rather than lovers of God {and His way of the cross}, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Tim. 3:1-2, 4-5)

It is not our intent to condemn. Our heart is with the apostle Paul. He “wept” over souls when he observed how they were being led “to destruction” because their minds remained on “earthly things.” (Phil. 3:18-19) Our purpose is to help expose the deceitful ways of the devil. We believe it is the duty of every spiritual leader to follow Paul’s example by revealing the whole counsel of God.

For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God... For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock... Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is

able to build you up and give you an inheritance {in the heavenly realms}
among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:27-29, 31-32)

What, then, should be the Christian's relationship to the world? The answer is found in his relationship to Christ. Christians are expected to be joined together with Christ in the heavenly realms. "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (1 Cor. 6:17) It is the picture of marriage. And you cannot be "one spirit" with Christ in the heavenly realms while you are committing spiritual adultery with the world.

God has provided sufficient light in His word to reveal what it means to be a lover of the world and its ways. And those who truly submit to the leading of the Spirit can depend on Him to separate them from it. Christ's disciples are not of this world.

I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because *they are not of the world...* I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one {the self-seeking and self-exalting spirit of the world}. *They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world...* (John 17:14-16)

We know that we are of God {because we have overcome the world}, and *the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.* {The world is living under the sway of Satan's "save thyself" maxim.} (1 John 5:19)

And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me {into the heavenly realms} cannot be My disciple... So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has {from his earthly form of life} cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:27, 33)

Is there any wonder why God says that friendship with the world causes people to become His enemy? They are living by the self-seeking and self-exalting principles that were originated by the devil. "This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there." (Jam. 3:15-16) It is a wisdom that destroys the soul.

Living for the pleasures of this world, entering into a partnership with its pursuits, or fashioning one's life by its principles, is a rejection of the form of life that God planned for His children. Because these activities do not come from above, but come from the natural and earthly plane, it prevents individuals from sharing with Christ in His heavenly life on the highest plane. Thus, the only way into heaven is to completely "overcome" the world. "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. 3:2)

A Simple Definition of Worldliness

Perhaps some reader is still in the dark as to the real meaning of being worldly. We can find the answer in 1 John 2:16. We are told that it is everything "not of the Father." Worldliness refers to a life that does not have its source in God. It is self-originated. You can recognize these works by the way that people look to be honored for what they have done with their own hands.

Their land is also full of idols; They worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. (Isa. 2:8)

Jesus did not do anything out from Himself. He did not live from His own resources as the devil does, because He was not looking to have His own honor and glory. He remained free from sin by never seeking to have an independent will. He had no desire to seek honor for Himself because everything He did had its source in the Father.

Yes, Jesus could have yielded to the temptations of the devil and turned to the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of this world. He could have used His own powers as God to acquire its greatest kingdoms. And while it would have provided great comfort and considerable earthly honor, it would not have been “of the Father.” It would have been worldly because the action would have originated in the world.

The Son specifically came as the Second Adam to reveal how God intended for man to live. He lived fully as a man. And He knew that men were required to live by the Spirit. It entails receiving everything from above. “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.” (John 3:27) *The choice to live independently of God in self-sufficiency is the essence of sin. It is in this sense that the self-originated form of life is the real meaning of worldliness.*

For all that is in the world {the works that originate in man}...*is not of the Father but is of the world.* (1 John 2:16)

Simply stated, the only way to avoid being worldly is to live by the Spirit. The people “of the world” direct their own steps and seek those things they find pleasing to themselves. They can be as religious as the most holy Pharisee, but their minds are still on earthly things and they remain “self-indulgent.” (Matt. 23:25) It is a way of life that is in direct conflict with the “light” that Jesus revealed.

We are not implying that God’s children do not, or cannot, enjoy “things” in His natural creation. But He does insist that we live by His Spirit rather than by the desires of the flesh. By walking in the Spirit we can receive our life directly from God. We are then enabled to consistently share with Him in His righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst...” (John 4:14) Those who find this heavenly life have found the secret for being content in every situation. They can walk in the world in good times and bad times without looking to it for their source of spiritual fulfillment. As the Father continued to live in the Son, never leaving Him alone, the Son continues to live in these heavenly-minded Christians with His eternal life. (Col. 3:1-3)

...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Phil 4:11-13 NIV)

{This is} the mystery which has been hidden from ages and generations...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. (Col. 1:26-28)

A person who is still trying to find life from the temporal realm will not understand this heavenly secret. Fallen man’s spiritual state is dependent upon his circumstances. His focus will be on trying to make his life enjoyable through the use of temporal things. It will be expressed in one’s conversation, in how one dresses, in the company one keeps, in the pleasures one enjoys, in the books one reads, in the appetites one indulges, in the things one buys, in the ambitions by which one is ruled, and in the activities in which one engages. The common ground is that it is self-focused. Even when it tries to be highly religious, it remains self-seeking and self-exalting. (Matt. 23:25)

Sadly, we often hear preachers telling people from their pulpits that everyone must expect to periodically go through periods of despondency, despair and a sense of spiritual defeat. And they try to leave the impression that their “wisdom” is confirmed in God’s Word. But they attempt to prove their point by using an earthly-minded perspective. An examination of their life will inevitably reveal how they are still trying to improve their own spiritual state by depending on temporal things. They will be found working to build their own little kingdoms in this world so they may have a pleasant environment to support their spiritual life. But this storing of their treasures on earth is what separates them from the heavenly life of God. It is the reason they do not experience the ever-flowing “rivers” of heavenly life that are now flowing from under the throne of Christ.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single {focused singly on God and His way of life}, thy whole body shall be full of light {the heavenly life of Christ}. But if thine eye be evil {where it is still motivated in some manner by self-seeking}, thy whole body shall be full of darkness... No man can serve two masters... (Matt. 6:21-24 KJV)

Anything that leads to a feeding or pampering of the flesh, which is the lower nature of man, whether it results in gross sensuality or simply leads to self-indulgence and living for personal pleasures, is worldliness. It is the “lust of the flesh,” and it will separate the soul from the heavenly life of Christ.

Anything that caters merely to the fashions of this world, that stimulates a desire to possess things, that aims to please men and gain their approval, that draws the eyes to the things that are seen rather than toward the unseen, is worldly. It is “the lust of the eyes,” and it will put a cloud between the heart and the life of Christ.

Anything that exalts self, that fosters pomp and display, that sets the affections upon the praise and honor that comes from man rather than on the honor that God gives to the humble, is worldly. It is “the pride of life,” and it will keep the mind groveling in the dust of this earth rather than soaring heavenward.

Is there any wonder why people who are living on this natural plane of life still find themselves becoming upset when things do not go their way, or they fall into periods of despondency when their little world falls apart? It simply reveals how they are still under the sway of the devil’s wisdom. They are trying to find life from this world. It continues to separate them from Christ’s heavenly life.

Do you still find yourself, in spite of everything you do to keep yourself lifted up, being weighed down by the oppressive spirit of this world? If so, you need to take your mind off earthly things and begin looking into the heavenly realms for your spiritual life. The resurrection power of the Holy Spirit has the capacity to consistently raise your spirit above the oppressive darkness that surrounds this fallen world.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary... {And you now have access to His everlasting life—the life that never fails.} He gives power to the weak {to those who have truly learned to live by a dependent and trusting faith}, and to those who have no might {to those who no longer live in the strength of the flesh} He increases strength {through the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit}. Even the youths {who live on the natural plane} shall faint and be weary, and the young men

{who think they are strong in themselves} shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord {by looking to Him in the heavenly realms to be the source of their life and works} shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isa. 40:28-31)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is {in the power of His endless life}... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:1-2)

There can be no harmony between the life that has its source in this world and the life that has its source in the eternal world. The slightest turning to the earthly realm cuts the heart off from Christ's ever-flowing "rivers" of Living Water. (Jer. 2:11-13) And we must realize that this Living Water is the real source of our Christian life. It is not our standards, but Christ's heavenly life of holy love consistently flowing through our soul that will manifest God's Glory—His righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And the only way to find the Lord in the power of His endless life is by following Him through the cross. We must turn from the world and look for life in the heavenly realms.

...But My people have changed their Glory {the eternal life that comes directly from God} for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid {of what it leads to}; "Be very desolate," says the Lord. "For My {called-out} people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns {by looking to this temporal world for their pleasures}—broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jer. 2:11-13)

But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Gal. 6:14)

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord {to know His indwelling life}, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things {the things that originate on the natural plane}, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection... (Phil. 3:8, 10)

Today is the day to be converted. It will entail completely turning the mind away from the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of this world, becoming like dependent little children, and entrusting everything to the Sovereign God of the universe. Only in this way is it possible to be lifted into His eternal Kingdom-life. (Matt. 18:3; Luke 12:29-34)

Is it necessary to say anything more to reveal the foolishness of remaining on the natural plane in a worldly form of life? If you have been convicted of infidelity, turn to God. If you will yield to "all truth," the Spirit will lead you into the wonderful liberty of life on the highest plane. Yes, today is the day to begin sharing in the life of the Trinity!

...If anyone desires to come after Me {into the heavenly realms}, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For...whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)

...If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word {by taking this way of the cross}; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. (John 14:23)

At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you {sharing in the life of the Trinity}. (John 14:20)

Living as Witnesses of the Resurrection Life

The lives of the early Christians were supercharged with a joyous consciousness of the Presence of their living Lord. Because He was so real to them, all their thoughts and affections rested in Him. Has this spiritual Presence of the living Lord become a reality to you? Are you completely occupied with the indwelling life of Christ? Are you truly satisfied in Him, or do you keep turning back to the natural world for your source of spiritual sustenance?

The life of holy love that Christ shares with His spiritual disciples is appealing to others. It reveals the holy calm of God mirrored in the face, the holy quietness of God manifested in the voice and the holy graciousness of God expressed in the manner. It is God so inhabiting His temple that He reveals Himself through human personality.

To have Christ abiding in us with the abundant fullness of His life is to have every need supplied, every desire fulfilled, every thirst quenched. “But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will *never thirst*.” It is to have our whole life perpetually refreshed and replete in Him. Such a realization of His indwelling Presence is one of the rich rewards of a Spirit-filled life. Unfortunately, some who were once “filled” have lost this divine Presence because they have begun to live by the wisdom of this world.

A study of the book of Acts reveals the sufficiency of a Spirit-filled life. These early disciples received sufficient power to suffer and to sacrifice, to teach and to preach, to witness and to work. Thousands of souls were born into the Kingdom of God and blessed through their Spirit-empowered ministry. While the wise men of this world condemned their lack of social status and their inadequate education, it did not prevent them from furthering the true kingdom of God. They had become living witnesses of Christ’s resurrection life. And so the opinions of worldly-minded people did not influence them. As they lived in the firstfruits of the life of heaven, they continued to draw others into the same “light of life.”

Once again we need to say with emphasize that this work was not wrought through human energy, education, zeal, wisdom or eloquence. They would have been complete failures if they had attempted to further the Son’s eternal Kingdom-life by trying to use the wisdom of this world. These so-called “ignorant” men help us to see how God has truly chosen to use those “who are not.” (1 Cor. 1:27-29) It also helps us to see what it means to have the power of the ascended Lord poured forth through Spirit-filled lives.

In contrast, we have tended to fill our pulpits today with “wise and learned” preachers. It has left the church powerless in comparison to these early years. The sufficiency is now coming from the wrong source. We now have men running the church in the strength of the flesh rather than through the power of Christ’s Spirit.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God. (2 Cor. 3:5)

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit {live through the Spirit}, rejoice in Christ Jesus {for what HE is doing}, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Cor. 9:8)

While we write to the whole church, we also know that these truths will not be fully understood by all. Paul realized that even earnest Christians would not be able to understand his words while they were still living on the natural plane. But we encourage every reader to turn to God and ask for understanding. Those who truly seek out light, without doubting, can depend on Him to lead them into all truth. (Jam. 1:5-7)

The whole body of Christ will need to come to an understanding of this “spiritual wisdom” if the church is to “come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13). This is the heritage of the true Christian church.