

**The unrepentant believer
and
the saint**

The unrepentant believer and the saint

The title of this little book is an Oxymoron; an oxymoron is a figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in combination. An unrepentant believer is in a real sense, impossible. A true believer should have come to repentance and remain living in repentance.

The unrepentant believer

Far too many people who think they are part of the church today, have a belief about God that comes from human understanding and fatal determination, so they are unaware, or blind to the truth, that saving faith in God comes from the determination of God. Believing in God is not the same as being saved by God. It's really very important we understand what saving or justifying faith actually is.

From this conflict of interests we have come to understand that there are two ways of believing in God, one says we can believe God loves us, so we are saved by His love. This claim of faith is limited to accepting the ideas and information about Jesus Christ.

Another way of believing is to have saving faith where the heart itself is convicted and becomes spiritually convinced Christ died for them, and is converted to the point of a willingness to die to self in order to gain Christ as the Lord of all. Therefore saving faith includes dying to self and placing all our trust in the One who rose again as Lord over all creation.

The unrepentant believer who accepts the first idea of faith is a nominal Christian who has not responded in repentance and faith to Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord. He or she may be a practising or non-practising church member.

They may give intellectual acceptance to basic Christian teaching and claim to be a Christian. And they may be faithful in attending sacramental rites and worship services, and even be an active member involved in church affairs. But because they have not repented, they still live for themselves and not for Christ.

Nominal Christians, who are church-goers or otherwise religious people, have a “faith” that does not go beyond being identified with a

church, Christian group, or denomination. They are Christians in name only; the Lordship of Jesus Christ has no transforming effect in their lives. They take a minimalist approach to what is their very personal faith; in this they have a religion of their own imagining.

A nominal Christian can often point to membership in a church as evidence of their salvation. But their Church attendance and participation is one of routines, activities, and programs that become the measuring stick for their belief, rather than having a changed life, a new heart, a love for God, and obedience to the Word of God.

2 Cor 5:17; John 14:23

Jesus wrote about nominal Christianity in one of His letters to the churches. The church in Sardis wore a Christian label, but Jesus saw the truth behind the label: *“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead”*

Rev 3:1

Nominal faith is not saving faith. The nominal have not repented.

The unrepentant are a big problem for the Church

A survey in 2018 of those who claim belief in the Christian God found that Christian belief was down from 2010. At that time 58% of professing Christians with a belief in the Christian God in Europe including England declared themselves to be nominal. The projected figure for professing Christians in 2020 is down from 58% to 50% with the nominal Christian expecting to be 50% of these. While the nominal number of Christians is down in 2020, so too are the numbers of those who claim a Christian faith.

Of those who claim some religious belief in the U.K. 46% claimed to be spiritual and 54% not. In Germany the figures were 21% yes to being spiritual and 79% not spiritual. In the 2018 survey, those who describe themselves as “deconverting” said it was because “God did not help them, especially in times of trouble.”

To the question: What is Spirituality? 75% felt it can sometimes be expressed through religion, but not always. 72% said it’s about the deepest part of our “inner self”/“soul.” 71% felt it forms part of our identity. 69% said it helps us in a hard time/crisis. 68% or it’s a source of peace. 64% said it gives us our values. 63% felt it’s a

source of hope. 31% The lowest number saw it is about relating to God. It is a telling result that only 31% see their spirituality as having something to do with their relationship with God.

In Great Britain 37% believe there is a God. 33% believe there is some sort of spirit or life force. 25% do not believe there is any sort of spirit, God or life force. 5% don't know. This is out of a population of 61.5 million people.

Steve Aisthorp suggests his survey indicates that “congregations may need to rediscover the priority of discipleship.” Some “invisible” Christians were happy to be such (31%), others wished to follow their own spiritual quest (41%), while a few (8%) would welcome the opportunity “to join a small group of Christians who meet in homes and discuss faith and life together.” How far we have fallen.

The figures for England and Europe surely have some relationship to people in Australia. In a recent survey by the ABC, Australians are not looking for more religion. Only 15 per cent of respondents thought the country would be better off if more people were religious. And what “religious” means is anybody's guess.

A major issue is how we understand the need for repentance

Sins against God need repentance

In the first place, breaking the Ten Commandments is serious sin and according to God requires our repentance. Idolatry is the sin of worship and devotion to images and other gods; or things, like a job and other people. Disregard for God's law and His written word is a grievous sin. Stubbornness in obeying God amounts to rebellion, and goes along with disobedience. Unfaithfulness to God is spiritual adultery and compromises our faith. Covetousness is selfishness and materialism, and considers material possessions and physical comfort more important than spiritual values. And so we can go through the Ten Commandments and see we are in great need of God's mercy that only comes through repentance.

A lack of love, devotion, and passionate service to God and others reveals a hard heart and blindness to the only true God. Being good enough is not nearly good enough. Sin is failing to love GOD for

who HE is, and failing to love our neighbours as we would want God to love us.

Repentance is a surrendered obedient heart

Repentance happens when we take a complete spiritual turnaround from living according to our own understanding in the darkness of the world's attitude to God, to live in and under the light of God.

Repentance is only effective when there is a real commitment to turning away from living in opposition to God's purposes as recorded in the Bible. Repentance is putting our free will into God's hands so we will what He wills.

Repentance leads to forgiveness, without forgiveness we will die in our sin. Our repentance and God's forgiveness means we are saved from our sin, and Jesus is our Saviour. A surrendered heart brings new spiritual life.

The Bible calls us to repent. The Biblical word for “repent” means “to change one’s mind or purpose.” This is how God calls us to respond to our sin. *“O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens.”* Ezra 9:6

“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning; And rend your heart and not your garments.” Joel 2:12-13

In short, God requires a humble and a broken heart. *‘The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.’* Psalm 51:17

Unless we come to Jesus in repentance we will die in our sin. Jesus said. *“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”* Luke 13:3, 5

Repentance is not done by all who says they believe

“He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.”

John 14:24

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in

heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

Matt 7:21-23

Not everyone who says they believe has died to self to live for Christ. *'He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.'*

2 Cor 5:15

Many join the Church and enjoy its benefits but soon find themselves drawn back into the world. *'For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.'*

Heb 6:4-6

John makes the point that the unrepentant aren't saints at all. *'They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.'*

1 John 2:19

From these verses we can see that the spiritual Church is to be made up of repentant believers called saints who no longer live from themselves, but for Jesus Christ. It is a sad reality that the Church may contain the unrepentant who may be religious, but they continue to live for themselves. Even so, the unrepentant do not gain the eternal benefits of those who have shown their faith by their repentance.

The reason for this is that the unrepentant have never been convicted of their sin enough to repent, and who have never turned away from the life they once lived in the world, so they cannot share in the life of heaven.

In Jesus own words "*I never knew you*" means they cannot be part of His church. Joining the Church as a member of Christ's spiritual body (1 Co 12:27) can only take place when we enter through the door of repentance to live for Him who died for our sins.

Acts 3:19

Being sorry isn't repentance

Many think it enough to say sorry. When someone does something wrong, "I'm sorry" doesn't count in repairing the damage. It's easy to be sorry. Being sorry means we regret things are the way they are. But sorry doesn't mean we are taking responsibility for our actions. Unless there is a change of heart the wrong doing will continue.

Being sorry is an important first step toward repentance, but sorrow alone doesn't do us any good. God's intention for us isn't just that we feel sorry. The conviction of the Holy Spirit brings a feeling of guilt. But God doesn't want us to feel guilty for ever, He has planned that guilt must come from conviction, and conviction should be followed by repentance, and forgiveness only comes after repentance. So God wants us to be changed by repentance. When we are change in our hearts we are in a suitable state to be reconciled to God, so we must repent.

In our repentance we acknowledge why something is wrong. Until we recognise how we have failed to love God, and as a result we have failed to love other people, we can't truly say we have repented. In repentance we are not to simply turn away from sin, and that's it; we are called to turn toward God and commit to His way of living. If we can't identify God's way, or how we should act in a way that pleases Him, we can't say we have turned toward Him.

The unrepentant life

The only sin God can't forgive is our life of sin we won't take to Him when the Spirit brings conviction. If we resist the Holy Spirit convicting in bringing us to repentance, there is no forgiveness. The unrepentant can only look forward to an eternity in hell and damnation.

The unrepentant person is able to join the church, because in many cases the gospel of God had been watered down so much so that the guilt that comes from the conviction of the Spirit of God is overlooked; and the subsequent need for turning their life around to serve God instead of self and the world is completely forgotten.

As a consequence of making the Church user friendly there is no real personal cost in discarding everything we trust in according to the ways of the world, in order to trust in God alone.

In a misguided attempt to get people saved, many have reduced the gospel to a personal felt need or spiritual desire, suggesting that simply by agreeing to accept Jesus died for the sins of the world, they could be blessed and go to heaven when they die. The Bible has been used out of context to say people can be saved without giving up self interests and trusting in worldly aspirations. For instance: *'that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.'*

Rom 10:9

However, using God's word this way overlooks what the Saviour Himself said is necessary for us to have life. *'And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.'*

Luke 9:23-24

The same Paul who wrote *"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord"* also wrote: *"For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection."* (Rom 6:5) The point Paul is making is, to have Christ's life we must share in His death to the flesh of our independent spirit. For God's will, must be done if we are to have eternal life.

Preaching that says yes to anyone who claims to believe, while the heart is still satisfied with the world, is a word that is not from God. This easy way to God is only given by men who don't really know the way to life is the death of Christ. For the Saviour Himself made it quite clear that the cost of our salvation is all we have and are. We give Him all of our sinful selves and He gives us all of His holiness.

The unrepentant person's belief that Jesus died for their sins is true, but this is only a half truth, and taken alone will mean a failure to repent, and this means they are unable to share in His life. In the eyes of those who won't take responsibility for their sins; their agreement to believe Jesus died for them is enough on its own to make them part of His Church; which may or may not include going to Church.

In some cases, agreeing to be a Christian may include the need for weekly church attendance and the learning of certain religious doctrine and prayers. Agreeing to be a Christian may also include doing some work for the church, or doing good work in the community.

But this isn't what Jesus said is necessary. Jesus said *"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."* (John 10:9) To enjoy what Jesus offers we must *'become united with Him in the likeness of His death.'* (Rom 6:5) *"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."* Luke 9:24

The ungodly behaviour of the unrepentant who call themselves Christians dishonours Christ and misleads those who may be seeking the truth in the Church, for ungodliness gives the impression that God doesn't live there anymore. Spiritual seekers may read the Bible, and see the beauty of the New Testament Church, and then look at the Church today and conclude that God must have gone home because of the absence of holiness. Unfortunately those we reject the ungodly church tar everyone with the same brush.

The unrepentant may look like followers of Christ on the outside, but they lack the power to walk as He walked. And when put to the test by adversity, they will show their real colours; and it will not be full of grace and truth; but full of fear and anger, with lots of grumbling about God and His people. Complaining is the first sign we are not trusting in God.

Nominal belief in the Church is now the norm rather than being the exception. Nominal believers are generally nice people, but God's rule for heaven requires saints who no longer live for themselves but for Jesus Christ.

Maintaining Church discipline in holiness is now very difficult, because the standards of the world have now become the measure of the Church. In many cases, people decide what is acceptable, and God is sidelined. Standing up for what is written in the Word of God, the Bible, is likely, in some quarters, to get one branded as a fanatic.

The mindset of the unrepentant

As the children of Adam, we are born into sin with the DNA of Adam's sin as part of our human life. The human nature of sin is often referred to in Scripture as the "flesh." This flesh is something that opposes God in its declaration of independence, for it seeks self gratification as opposed to living according to the holiness of God.

The Bible tells us: *'For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.'* (Rom 8:5) *'For the mind set on the flesh is death.'* (Rom 8:6) *'the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.'*

Rom 8:7-8

These verses show that the unrepentant are still under obligation to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. The unrepentant in their daily lives think mostly about the world and the things of the world that gratify their fleshly nature.

Those who are fleshly are slaves of the sinful nature (Rom 6:16) and unable to overcome its power to control their lives. *'For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 'I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good'.... 'But I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.'*

Rom 7:21, 23

Not only is the unrepented life enslaved to sin, it is in direct opposition to the Spirit of God. *'For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another.'*

Gal 5:17

Therefore it isn't too difficult to see that goodness of the unrepentant is skin deep. *'For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips without self control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of*

pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.'

2 Tim 3:2-5

The unrepentant will not endure sound Biblical teaching. *'For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.'*

2 Tim 4:3-4

Everyone needs to repent for forgiveness

Jesus said, *"I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."* (Luke 5:32) *"In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

Luke 15:10

Repentance is the only door to heaven and eternal life with God

If there is no repentance, there will be no forgiveness of sin and no eternal life, because there is only judgment from God for the unrepentant. The unrepentant will die in their sins. The unrepentant live in the darkness without the necessary light to live for God.

Repentance is when we take a complete spiritual turnaround from living according to our own understanding in the darkness according to the thinking of the world, to live in and under the light of the knowledge of God. Repentance is a surrendered obedient heart. A surrendered heart brings new life. Repentance is putting our free will into God's hands. Repentance is only effective when there is a real commitment to turning away from living in opposition to God's purposes. Without forgiveness we will die in our sin.

Our repentance and God's forgiveness means we are saved from our sin, and Jesus is the saviour. When his mother Mary was visited by an angel, she was told, *"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."* Matt 1:21

Repentance is required of everyone who walks on earth since we are sinners naturally because we are all born with Adam's nature. Through one man's disobedience, Adam, we are born into sin, and we are born with a sin nature. In order to be made righteous we need

to have a new nature only God can give in Jesus Christ, who is the Son of obedience.

To have a new nature we *'You must be born again.'* (John 3:7) To be born again we need to die to the old nature we inherited from Adam. (Rom 6:4) We can't be in Adam to decide how we live, and claim to be in Christ at the same time.

Jesus came to deal with the cause of sin, our sin nature. Nothing can free us from sin apart from a new beginning, a death to sin and a new life with God. We have to be set from the sin nature if we are to be released from the power of sin in our lives. If the sin nature is finished we will not go on living as sinners.

The saint

The word 'saint' is also the word for 'holy.' Believers are referred to as saints 61 times in the New Testament. A holy person is a "saint" meaning a sanctified one. This means they are "set apart" and "different" from the world. The saint is committed to loving God and not the world. *'Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'*
1 John 2:15

Saints are made holy unto God to do the will of God, and are different to those in who live according to the values of the world and self interest.

'To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.'
1 Cor 1:2

'And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; His kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'
Daniel 7:27

'Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.'
Rev 14:12

'For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.'
1 Cor 14:33

The heart of the saint is Christ

How many of those who attend Church regularly would say they no longer live for themselves but for Jesus Christ who paid for their sins? *'He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.'*

2 Cor 5:15

Before we can live for Christ from the heart, we need to see the problem of spiritual poverty in ourselves. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Matt 5:3

To know the reality of our spiritual poverty is the first thing needed before we can confess our need for the grace of God and true repentance. This poverty is revealed to us by the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, as the Lord indicated, *"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."*

John 16:8

Without the humility that comes as a result of the Spirit's conviction, there is only self righteousness. Without humility there can be no Church which lives as the Body of our Lord and Saviour, because without humility there will be a lack of the pure love of selfless devotion which is poured out into our hearts by the Spirit, because the Spirit will not sustain those who will not bow down low before Him and obey all His commandments.

For the repentant, poorness of spirit brings with it a desperation to be done with sinfulness, and powerful desire to be free from the body of this death, (Rom 7:24) so that we can respond to the call of Christ to take up His yoke of authority upon our lives, (Matt 11:29) as we die to self in order to be delivered from darkness into His eternal light. *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."*

Matt 16:24-25

The Holy Spirit is the great attention grabber, and when God has our attention we become so desperate for release we will even die to our self enough to change our minds and let Him change us, so that a new life is manifested where there was once death and darkness.

Jesus Christ calls anyone who will follow Him. He begins with IF anyone wishes, if anyone will deny himself he can follow. If we won't sacrifice the natural life in the flesh, we cannot have the spiritual life necessary to be with Christ in heaven. The sacrifice of the natural life is the reality of true repentance.

The sacrifice of our natural life in the flesh is our sanctification when we receive Christ, and when the manifestation of the life of Christ becomes a reality in us. A failure to repent means we reject the only way to abundant life in Christ, the only way to heaven.

The repentant soul knows that Christ is first in all things. *'He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.'* (Col 1:18) So the repentant believer lives for Christ. *'They who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.'* 2 Cor 5:15

The way to be blessed with eternal life is to start at the bottom; life begins with our death to self, the way up to glory is to go down in humility first. *'For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.'* Rom 6:6-7

The Spiritual Church is holy

Since the saints are holy, the Church is supposed to be holy, set aside from the world to do the work of God according to His will and purpose.

Unlike the unrepentant, the saints are "made holy" through Christ's work on the cross and since. The blood of Jesus Christ sanctifies the repentant, (Heb 13:12) because His atonement reversed the effects of sin. Those who benefit from the blood of Christ are progressively sanctified through faithful obedience to Christ, and by the indwelling Spirit. 2 Cor 3:18

While God sets us apart for His use, we the Church are not to leave our transformation in holiness to God. We work out the holiness that God is working in us. *"Since we have these promises, dear friends,*

let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." 2 Cor 7:1

Therefore Peter reminds believers to be certain of their calling. *'Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.'* 2 Peter 1:10

And Paul instructs the Church to be conformed to what God is working in them. *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing.'* Phil 2:12-14

The Church is the gathering of the saints

What we call "the Church" is a translation from the Greek word which means "*the called-out ones*" it refers to those persons who have actually been called out of the world by God and regenerated or quickened by the Holy Spirit; these are God's elect believers in the true Church. The Church is not the building or some social club.

The emphasis on '*the called out ones*' came when Jesus calls someone to a relationship with Him as a disciple to live His life. In this He calls them out of the world to follow Him, to learn from Him so that they could live as holy children of God and walk as He walked. This 'calling out' is done in the context of the Church.

The only thing that makes us saints is Christ in us after repentance. The life of Jesus in us by the Spirit of God is what makes us Christians. *'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.'* Gal 2:20

'So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die.' Rom 8:12-13

The true church is made up of saints who are committed to living in obedience to Christ and for Christ, and trusting their whole lives to God. *'He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for*

themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.'

2 Cor 5:15

Therefore since the church is the body of Christ, all the saints are to maintain its holiness in the truth of God's word.

How can brothers and sisters who are one Spirit in Christ, who live in communion with God and each other, claim to have a private faith all to themselves, unless they have something to hide? The church in the world is not one Spirit, but many separated individuals doing their own thing.

However, the saints are one in Christ, rejoicing always, giving thanks in all things, knowing God is always with them, so they have nothing to hide, and they delight in sharing their faith in Christ with anyone who will listen, especially their brothers and sisters in the Lord.

To be saints we must be born of God

"Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

John 3:7

We must be born again because the life we inherited from Adam is corrupted by sin, and cannot enter the kingdom of God; we need a new life of holiness only inherited from God. The only way to heaven begins with the conviction of sin as a work of the Spirit of God. *'When He comes, will convict the world concerning sin.'* (John 16:8) Conviction of sin must then be followed with the faith of repentance, for many are convicted but few believe enough to repent. Many see guilt as a bad thing, but the conviction of the Spirit must expose our guilt, so guilt is a good thing if we really want to get right with God. And once we are on the right way, guilt brings us back to repentance when we have miss-stepped.

As a result of repentance the Holy Spirit gives us a new birth in the image of Christ. This means the holiness and the character of Christ is implanted in the believer. The life of the Spirit brings all the blessings of God, along with the power to live a life of holiness and obedience, as demonstrated to us by Jesus Christ, with whom the believer lives by the Spirit of God. The only way to be able to live the life of a disciple that Jesus requires is first to be born again by the Spirit of God, and to then walk by the enabling of the Spirit in all we do.

Being born again is to be born of the nature of God as His children. *'For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.'* (Gal 3:26) Jesus came to save us from our sins by giving us a new life freed from the power of sin.

Rom 6:7; 8:2

This work of God gives us assurance that our heavenly Father doesn't demand from us what we cannot possibly do. Our God does what is needed so we can obey Him. God doesn't just demand we follow the example of Jesus, He gives us the life of Jesus Christ, and tells us to follow Him, and live the way He lived, to obey all He commanded His followers to do, so we can be transformed into His image. *'When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.'* (Col 3:4) The life Jesus gives is a life of the Spirit so we can be saints who glorify God. *'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.'*

1 Cor 6:19-20

Those who repent have the Christ life living in them by the Spirit. God gives us a new life that we may grow up to be like Christ. *'For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren, and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.'*

Rom 8:29-30

We are a new creation in Christ, *'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.'* (2 Cor 5:17) As new creations we are to leave behind all our baggage of our old sinful nature, otherwise we cannot grow in the new. We are to offer ourselves to Christ in love as He offered Himself to the Father and *"became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."* (Phil. 2:8) *'Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.'*

Rom 12:1

Repentance is the door to a new life with God; this is a life with continuous change as the power of God works in us to make us more like Christ. But if there is no loathing of the way we lived in darkness

with our self centeredness, (Ezek 36:31) we will not want the door of repentance that leads to life, and we may even deny we need forgiveness, so we will not see the need to turn around, and we will remain in the dark and die in our sin. Only those who see themselves as sinners see the need for repentance. The Christian life is only possible when we go through the door that leads to life, and that door is Christ. (John 10:7) We can only enter that door when we die to self to live for Christ. (Luke 9:23-24) Christ is then our life. (Col 3:4) Then we live in repentance daily as we see in us what is not belonging to the Christ life.

Only those who love the Lord know how to love as God loves. “*YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.*’ *This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.’*”
Matt 22:37-39

The motivation for the saint is the love of God

‘The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.’ (Rom 5:5) Therefore, “*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*”
John 14:15

“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”
John 15:10

“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”
John 14:21

“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”
John 14:23

The Holy Spirit preserves the saint

The Holy Spirit is the power of God for our growth as saints in holiness.
Rom 15:16 ; 1 Peter 1:2

The Spirit uses the Word of God to sanctify the obedient believer. Jesus prayed concerning His disciples, “*Sanctify them by the truth.*” (John 17:17) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.
John 16:13

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in believers; *'However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.'*

Rom 8:9

The Holy Spirit also equips believers to serve the church and the world.

1 Cor 12:4-11

The saints are led by the Spirit. *'For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.'*

Rom 8:14

The Holy Spirit assures us we are in Spirit. *'you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you'*

Rom 8:9

Since growth in holiness is an ongoing process, the saints live a life of repentance as they put off what is fleshly and put on the life of Christ.

Eph 4:22-24

When we live in repentance God upholds us with His strong right arm and His eternal love, so that no temptation to doubt Him will be able to prevent us from trusting Him, for He always gives us a way to remain.

1 Cor 10:13

The saints are to guard against falling away from all diligence in maintaining holiness, and steadfastly holding to a fervent love for Christ. *'Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you.'*

2 Pet 1:10

The saints are to spur one another on to good deeds, (Heb 10:24-25) admonishing one another (Col 3:16) to grow in the image of Christ.

True conversion is from sinner to saint. Converted people are new creations in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17) There is a decisive break away from the old way of life lived according to the world's values, to embrace the life of Christ and His will. This determined separation from the old way is described in terms of death and resurrection.

Rom 6:1-4

These new saints live for Christ and righteousness sake, just as our Saviour lives for righteousness according to the will of the Father and for His sake. The way to eternal life is the way of death to sin and self justification. Only if we first die to self determination and our declaration of independence can we be raised to new life, and become new creatures in Christ. If we have truly died to sin once in

our conversion, we will seek daily to die to the sin that still remains in our lives. The new life in Christ is therefore a life of ongoing repentance.

“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.” John 12:25

The terrible consequences of non-repentance:

The unrepentant aren't believers, they may have been baptised at some time, and been accepted into membership of the church, but that doesn't mean they have died to life in the flesh and being reborn by the Spirit for a life of holiness and obedience to God.

The unrepentant don't know what it is to be poor of spirit. Matt 5:3

The unrepentant have not denied themselves to follow Christ. Luke 9:23

The unrepentant are not led by the Spirit. Rom 8:14

The unrepentant cannot understand the spiritual truths of the scriptures. 1 Cor 2:14

The unrepentant live for themselves and not for Christ. 2 Cor 5:15

They don't have fellowship with God. 1 John 1:3

God doesn't answer their prayers. John 9:31

They cannot enjoy the witness of the Spirit that they are children of God. Rom 8:16

They cannot discipline their lives to walk by the Spirit. Gal 5:16

The unrepentant do not have the Spirit and do not belong to God. Rom 8:9

The unrepentant have no real victory over sin and the flesh. Gal 5:16-17

The unrepentant think it is possible to be friends with the world and friends with God. James 4:4

The unrepentant don't live by the word of God because they have their own opinions. 2 Tim 4:3

They have no interest in putting to death that which is earthly in them. Col 3:5

The unrepentant have all they treasure in the world. Matt 6:19-21

Their mindset is on the flesh. Rom 8:5

The world and the things of the world occupy their minds. Matt 6:24

The unrepentant have a worthless tickets to heaven, because there will be no bus coming to take them there. They have fire insurance, but there will be no one to put out the flames. Matt 14:6

They remain slaves of the prince of darkness. Eph 6:12

The unrepentant don't have spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ. 1 Cor 12:7

Once the weeds grew up amongst the wheat, now the valuable Wheat is hidden amongst the worthless weeds. Matt 13:24-30

In the New Testament Church, the unrepentant believers were in the minority, but now, they are the majority, and as a result, the wonderful characteristics of the New Testament Church in many ways, is impossible. The real spiritual church is more invisible than ever before.

The unrepentant are destined for the eternal judgment of God. *'Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.'* Rom 2:4-5

Finally, repentance means living for Christ

Man invited sin and suffering into the world when he declared his independence from living for God in all things. Now God allows this sin and suffering bought on by man, and He is using it to being all to conviction and repentance, so that everyone who has life will live for Christ who died for their sins. 2 Cor 5:15

If there was no suffering through sin, there would be no motivation to change the status quo, so no one would turn from their declaration of independence to live entirely for the love of God.

What makes us right before God? Christ in us, Jesus Christ living in us. (Gal 2:20) This means we live for Christ and not ourselves. Consequently we cannot be in Christ and go on living in the domain of devil at the same time.

If we go on sinning and feel no need of repentance, we have been deceived into thinking we are forgiven; we have never really repented and we were never really saved. *'Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.'*
1Cor 15:1-2

The church around the world is full of people who have never really repented, because they think they are nice people who try to be good so they will go to heaven. They are mistaken in thinking they are good enough, and saved by their own efforts. They may be sorry for doing wrong, but don't do anything about the cause of their sin.

With the wrong attitude about goodness, some have never seen their darkness as God sees it, they have not loathed their behaviour as those who are poor in spirit, and they don't realise all darkness is from the sinful nature controlled by the prince of darkness. They have been blinded to the fact that all who remain in sin will face the Judgment of God. They live according to their nature in Adam and cannot possibly produce the fruit of the Spirit's life because He is not resident in them.
Rom 8:9

If 2 Cor 5:15 isn't a good measure of our life, then we have need of heartfelt repentance if we want the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection. Is Jesus before all things in your life? *'He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.'*
Col 1:18

We are one Spirit with Christ. The saints are all born with the same spirit of Christ, the progress we make in manifesting Christ is determined by how ready we are to put off, that is, to put to death that which remains of the old fleshly nature. This putting off is the ongoing process of repentance, the readiness to repent is determined by how committed we are in separating ourselves from the world.

We may not have the same spiritual gifts as Paul, but all the saints have the same Spirit, the same spiritual life, the same power over sin and the one who gives us abilities according to His sovereign desire for us to contribute to the body of Christ.

Growth in Christ is determined by what we believe, and how much we obey. Belief without obedience will always result in a lack of repentance with a state of ungodliness.

Our goal for the Church is an exclusive gathering of the holy saints who walk with God, because they follow Jesus Christ, and they willingly do this in order to be transformed into His image and likeness, regardless of the cost in the world.

Listen to the words of Jesus Christ. *"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters."* Matt 12:30

"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Matt 12:36-37

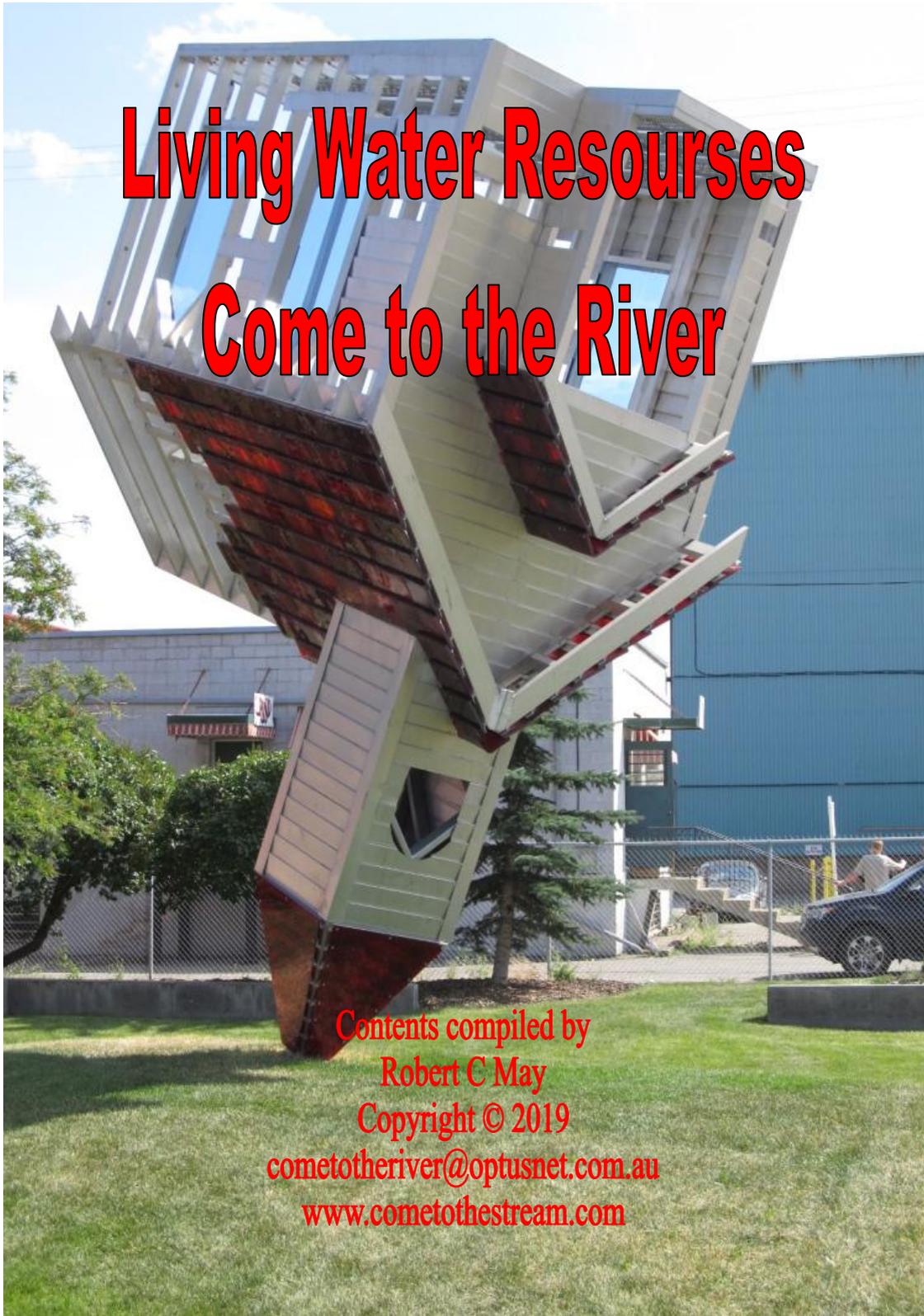
The unrepentant are careless with their words about God.

If you have never really repented of your sinful nature and your deeds of darkness, hear the Lord. *"AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU."* Behold, now is *"THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION."* 2 Cor 6:2

'Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.' 2 Cor 5:20

If you have repented, live according to the life Christ has placed in you.

Abide in Him

A large sculpture of a house, tilted upside down, stands on a grassy lawn. The house is white with a dark brown roof and is positioned as if it has fallen or is about to fall. In the background, there is a blue building, a chain-link fence, and a car. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Living Water Resources Come to the River

Contents compiled by
Robert C May
Copyright © 2019
cometotheriver@optusnet.com.au
www.cometothestream.com