



The Doctrines and Discipline of African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

By African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They earnestly desired (as did two or three more the next day) that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together; which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave such advice, from time to time, as he thought most needful for them, and they always concluded their meetings with prayer suited to their several necessities.

This was the rise of the United Societies, first in Europe, then in America. Such a society is no other than "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in the unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he shall return to judge all men at the last day.

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one Substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scriptures, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority there never was any doubt in the Church.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the First Book of Samuel, the Second Book of Samuel, the First Book of Kings, the Second Book of Kings, the First Book of Chronicles, the Second Book of Chronicles, the Book of Ezra, the Book of Nehemiah, the Book of Esther, the Book of Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, the Four Prophets the greater, the Twelve Prophets the less; all the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account them canonical.

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