

WHAT WE BELIEVE

An Exposition of The
Faith of The Church
of God.



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All Men Be Saved," Etc.



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PREFACE.

In again coming before a patient public with a book, my only apology is, that in writing this Exposition I have yielded to a demand which came to me verbally and in letters from various parts of the country. The matter in this pamphlet was originally written as a series of articles for *The Restitution, of Plymouth, Indiana*, and is here reproduced with some changes. That the reader may derive real and lasting good from the perusal of these pages, is the sincere wish of the

AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

"We believe in the final restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

As a means to this end, the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth, with the Christ as King of kings, and the immortal saints as joint heirs with him in the government of the nations; the restoration of Israel; the literal resurrection of the dead; the immortalization of the righteous; the final destruction of the wicked, and eternal life only through Christ.

Also a hearty belief of the gospel, repentance, and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ as prerequisites of the forgiveness of sins, and a holy life as essential for final salvation."

The foregoing statement of belief, standing at the head of The Restitution for a number of years, is a fair expression of the faith of the brotherhood quite generally. As a religious body of people we believe the things therein set forth. We hold that they express truth, not only in a general way, but essential, saving truth. Such, not because we thus hold, or because we so proclaim, but because revealed in the Word of God. The latter must, of course, be the basis of our faith as relating to our salvation. The Scriptures, as given by inspiration of God, are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.

We not only believe these things, but contend that they should be proclaimed, as God's means of saving men and women from the ruin of sin. That they are truth is beyond question. But it is equally true that, though most clearly taught in the Word of God, they are not only neglected, but comparatively unknown to many who claim to be Christians.

It may be inquired by the uninformed, "Do you have a creed? If so, from whence have you the right to frame one?" This question deserves consideration. Creed is from credo, "I believe." Paul said, "I believe, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." 2 Cor. 4:13. Our faith must have an object; it must have something to believe. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Rom. 10: 17.

The apostles were commissioned to go and preach the gospel, the

glad tidings. These "tidings" were about something; this something must have been believed by those who proclaimed it to others. In this they acted upon the same principle which prompted Paul when he said, "I believe, and therefore speak." Not only did they herald their faith by word of mouth, but also penned the things which they themselves believed, so communicating them to others, and providing for their perpetuation. Were they living in our day, they would doubtless utilize the advantages offered by the press to proclaim the truth they themselves believed.

Thus the church has seen fit to set forth the leading features of the things to be believed—not as a barrier, but rather as a stimulus to investigation; not as containing every detail embraced in the economy of God as relating to man, but as giving a general outline of the things to be believed and done in order to be saved. This has the advantage of not only defining the faith of the church, but of unifying the members and of making the proclamation of the truth uniform and harmonious. There was need of "unity of the faith," not only in apostolic times, but this is even now indispensable to the obtainment of the end for which the Church exists. Who can not see the evil that would result from a want of unity in the body of Christ, if each were to promulgate a theory of his own? There have always been tendencies in the church to dwell on certain things, though of themselves perfectly true and legitimate, at the expense of certain other things of relatively greater importance. It is partly to obviate such tendencies that the Church of God says, "We believe."

CHAPTER I.

THE RESTITUTION.

"The restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:21. What did the inspired speaker contemplate under this "restitution?" "Things" are to be subject to a "restitution." These things have been "spoken." God is the Speaker. The agents employed in this were "all his holy prophets since the world began." What is the meaning and scope of the restitution here spoken of? Let the emphasis be placed upon the word "all" thus: "The restitution of all things spoken." By reference to the context (Acts 3: 15-21) the reader will see that some "things" which have been uttered "by the mouth of his prophets," found their fulfillment in the events connected with the crucifixion of Christ. But this did not constitute "all things which God had spoken." "Those things" mentioned at v. 18 are some of the "things spoken," but there are other things whose establishment, fulfillment or accomplishment will be at another time and in another way than by the death of Christ. This has been accomplished, but now the heavens must receive Him "until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken," etc. Then, as these "times" are to begin, God will "send Jesus Christ" (20); then, too, will come "the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," to those who hear and heed that Prophet — Christ. To those who refuse submission, "and will not hear that Prophet," it will mean their utter destruction from among the people. Acts 3:23.

By placing this at the front of our confession of faith, we show that we not only believe in the work of Christ in the future, but also that we appreciate what He has done in the past; in fact, that His accomplished work of making an atonement, ratifying for us the new covenant, securing eternal life, is to us a pledge of good faith on the part of God to carry out "all things" He has contemplated and promised "by his holy prophets."

CHAPTER II.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"As a means to this end (that is, "the restitution of all things which God has spoken"), the Church of God advocates "the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth, with the Christ as King of kings, and the immortal saints as joint heirs with him in the government of the nations." It may be said that all "churches" teach the establishment of the kingdom of God, and hence there is no need of making this so prominent as a point of difference from other religious bodies. But what does the Bible teach us about the establishment of the kingdom of God? It will be observed that the Church of God teaches "the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth." "True," the objector may say, "but so do we. We hold that the Kingdom of God is on the earth." Some explain that "the Kingdom of God is in the heart" of the believer, while others maintain that the Church is the Kingdom, and that the terms "church" and "kingdom" are synonymous. While it is claimed by the advocates of these views that they are taught in the Bible, and are therefore matters of faith with those who so hold, the Church of God does not subscribe to either of these views. It is in order here to say that the Church of God believes in the future "establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth," Why "future?"

1. Because the God of heaven has promised to "set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Dan 2:44. It is clear from these statements, (a) that the kingdom here promised is to occupy the same territory occupied by all these kingdoms; (b) that it is to supercede the kingdoms which it shall destroy; (c) that it shall not pass out of the hands of its original possessors; and (d) that it shall stand forever.

2. It is evident that at no time in the past was such a kingdom established, neither is now in existence. This being true, the Church of God looks for "the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth" as a future event. This kingdom is one of the "things spoken" by the mouth of all God's holy prophets, and its establishment on the earth is one of "the means to this end," the restitution of all things which God has spoken. How, then, can the Kingdom be otherwise than future, especially in view of the fact that God has not yet "sent Jesus Christ," whose occupancy of heaven is limited "until (up to) the times of restitution of all things spoken?"

We would not underrate the importance and effectiveness of Christ's past and present work, in shedding His blood for many for the remission of sins, in sealing the new covenant of life for those who will obey Him; as

well as the institution of the Church as a training school for those who through the gospel and incipient obedience-baptism-are disciplined to Him. All this has its place and function, and when properly used, will work out the end designed by the wisdom and beneficence of God. But let it be strictly borne in mind that these very arrangements of God's grace are not a finality—not the end to be attained, but only a means to the end. All this has been lost sight of by those who contend that the Kingdom of God is now in operation, either in the effects of the grace of God in the heart of the believer or in the Church instituted by Christ. In order to reduce this matter to a more tangible form, let me say that a kingdom consists of at least five different elements: (a) a king, as the term kingdom implies; (b) subjects; (c) territory; (d) a capital and (e) a code of laws.

It will be seen that the article of faith under discussion speaks of "the Christ as King of kings." Why does the Church of God teach that "the Christ" will be this King? Because of the promises God made concerning His right to reign. We may here briefly refer to the promises God made to David concerning the perpetuity of his throne. "I have made a covenant with my chosen," says God, "I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy Seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations. . . . My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His Seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." Ps. 89:3, 4, 34-37. Reference to the original covenant and David's understanding of these matters pertaining to a "great while to come," may be found in 2 Sam. 7:12-29. Prior to the birth of "the Christ" who is to be this "King of kings," it was announced that "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:31-33. This was also the burden of the announcement to the shepherds: "Fear not; for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10, 11. It is because of his relationship to David that the Christ is entitled to "the throne of his father David." The apostle Peter had this in mind when he uttered these words: "Therefore (David) being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ," etc. Acts 2:30, 31.

It may be asked, "Is not the Christ now seated upon his throne, and the kingdom in full operation?" Let us observe what "the Christ" himself had to say as to the time when He shall "sit upon the throne of His glory." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Matth. 25:31. To prove that the Son of man is now seated upon the throne of His glory, it would be necessary to establish the proposition that He has "come in his glory and all the holy angels with him." And this would necessitate the further conclusion that he has sent his angels, and has gathered His elect from the four

winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matth. 24:30, 31), and also that he has given rewards to "every man according to his works." Matth. 16:27. For all these things belong to a time after His coming in glory. The Apostle Paul charged Timothy "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word." 2 Tim. 4:1, 2. He shall judge; the time is at his appearing and his kingdom. Has he appeared? If so, when? To the Corinthian brethren the apostle addressed this caution: "Judge no thing before the time until the Lord come." 1 Cor. 4:5. The Lord is to judge when He comes. To judge before He comes, is to "judge before the time." The Lord had not come when Paul wrote; the time to judge had not arrived; therefore the Kingdom of God was future in the days of the apostle Paul.

CHAPTER III.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (continued)

If the Kingdom was future in Paul's day, as has been shown, has it been established since then, with Paul and all the saints then living (who have long since died) left out? Are not the saints to "judge the world?" 1 Cor. 6:2. And does not "this honor" belong to "all his (God's) saints?" Ps. 149:9. "The kingdom shall not be left to other people" than its original possessors. When once the "saints of the Most High" shall have taken the Kingdom, will it be possible for them ever to die? Not if those statements just cited from the Scriptures be true. So, if it was possible for Paul and those "saints" whom he addressed to die, upon what reasonable ground can it be said that the Kingdom is now in operation? Those who contend that because Christ has gone to heaven and is seated with His Father upon His throne, therefore He is now reigning; entirely overlook several very important facts. Christ is not seated upon the throne of His (own) glory, but jointly occupies His Father's throne. He has promised to overcomers to sit down with Him in His throne, as He overcame and is seated with His Father in His throne. Rev. 3:21. When He shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. Matth. 25:31. He will not and does not reign over the saints. He is High Priest over the house of God. Heb. 3:6; 10,21. They of the Church are not subjects, but "friends", John 15 1-3-15, whom He has taken into His confidence, to whom He has disclosed His plans with a view to exaltation with Himself in the Kingdom. See Matth. 19:28; Luke 12:32; 22:18-30; Acts 14:22; Rom. 8:16, 17; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:12; as also the parable of the nobleman. Luke 19:11-27.

This brings us to another statement in the article of faith. In this "the Christ" is contemplated as "King of king." Yet he is not alone in "the government of the nations," inasmuch as "the saints" are associated as "joint heirs with Him." A joint heir is one who has a joint interest with another. That in which the interest exists, is the kingdom. He who holds this interest is the Christ. Those having the joint interest are "the saints." These are they to whom "the Kingdom" shall be given, Dan. 7:18, 27. This is the class who shall "judge the world." 1 Cor. 6:2.

It is evident from this that not all persons are "saints." A saint is a holy person. God calls men and women to be saints. Rom. 1:7. He does this by means of the gospel. 2 Thess. 2:14. But what is a saint, a holy person. We shall see by contrast. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. 6:9, 10. The persons doing such things are not saints, but unholy ones, and are therefore excluded from the Kingdom of God. It follows that those who shall have an inheritance in the Kingdom of God do not practice these things, but live under a different rule of life. Through the gospel they have been acquainted with glory and virtue as displayed in the character and life of Jesus, and they follow His steps and imitate His example of pleasing not self but God? Rom. 15:3; 1 Thes. 4:1; Col. 1:10; Heb. 11:6. They are saints, holy ones, separate from sin. Righteousness will be the rule of the Kingdom, and no one who has not by obedience to the gospel and its requirements learned righteousness, and suffered for righteousness' sake can enter as a "joint heir with the Christ" to reign in righteousness. The "works of the flesh" (Gal. 6:19-21), being the product of the "lusts of the flesh" (1. John 2:16), must be overcome and put away. Eph. 4:22-24. It is plain that "they who are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. 8:8, 13. To overcome these tendencies is no small matter and requires the use of all the light and energy we possess. The way into the Kingdom leads through tribulation. Acts 14:22. This means severe struggles. Without suffering we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. 2 Thess. 1:5. Suffering is needed to make us perfect. "If we suffer we shall reign with him." 2. Tim. 2:12.

All this makes it plain that the Kingdom of God is not now in operation, because the "joint heirs with the Christ" have not yet all been taken out and perfected. Joint inheritance with Christ is not yet the order of the day. In this mortal condition joint rulership with Christ in an "everlasting" or endless Kingdom is impossible.

CHAPTER IV.

THE IMMORTALIZATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Having shown by copious Scripture testimony that the saints shall reign with Christ, we will examine the subject of "the immortalization of the righteous." The Church of God holds that all men, including the righteous, are mortal, subject to death. If not even the righteous are immortal, how can it be said that all men, regardless of who or what they are, possess this quality? This is not only a delicate point, but a vital one. It will be conceded that the body of man is mortal, but to say that man in his entirety is mortal, is to strike at the very heart of modern religious teaching; for confessedly and manifestly the doctrine of "the immortality of the soul" is a fundamental article of nearly all religious teaching. It is not particularly gratifying to know that almost all "orthodox Christendom" is

arrayed against us, and we do not wish to oppose so many well-meaning people simply to be contrary. On the other hand, it is a satisfaction to know that, although the majority of religious teachers is against us, we are not necessarily wrong because comparatively "few" in number, especially since the prophetic word clearly predicted the defection of "many" from the faith, by reason of whom the way of truth should be evil spoken of. 1. Tim. 4:1; 2. Tim. 4:3; 2. Pet. 2:1, 2. We shall stand by the truth, though unpopular, and take the consequences, knowing that in the end "the truth shall make you free."

The term "immortalization of the righteous" implies that none but righteous ones will obtain immortality. The righteous only are candidates for immortality. Immortal saints are associated with Christ as "joint heirs in the Kingdom." What is this immortality, and when shall it be the possession of "the righteous?" Abstractly the term means deathlessness, not to be subject to death. But there is a more tangible definition than this. It is in the Person of the risen and glorified Savior, who said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forever more. Amen." Rev. 1:18. The same thought was expressed by the Apostle John. "This is the record, that God hath given to us" eternal life, and this life is in the Son." 1. John 5:11. What God "hath given to us is styled "eternal life." It is not "in" us; it is "in the Son." Not as He was in the likeness, of the flesh of sin, but as manifested in His glorious body. 1. John 1:2; Heb. 7:16; 13:20. Thus have life and incorruption been illustrated. 2. Tim. 1:10, Diaglott. God has thus tangibly given us eternal life that we might "lay hold" of it. 1. Tim. 6:12.

It was impossible for Jesus to be exalted to His present position as High Priest without passing through the ordeal of suffering and death, and so being made immortal; neither will the saints be admitted to the honors of the Kingdom without obedience to Christ. Heb. 5:8, 9. This obedience will result in "eternal salvation" to those who exercise it. This salvation will be nothing short of their complete redemption from sin and all its consequences, including "the last enemy death." 1. Cor. 15:26.

Of those who obtain immortality, or the power to live as well as reign forever, Christ is the "Firstfruits." 1. Cor. 15:20, 23. He is the Captain of their salvation. Heb. 2:10. Had it been possible for Him to obtain endless life (Ps. 21:4) without obedience unto death they might likewise have come to this result in the same way. But since it was necessary for Him to pass through the ordeal of death in order to rise to glory, honor, and incorruption, so must His followers either be raised from the dead to the incorruptible nature, or, if living be changed from mortal to immortal. This will take place at the coming of Christ; for "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 1. Cor. 15:23. "They that are Christ's are those belonging to Him, who through faith and obe-

dience have come into that relation with Christ that He may "raise them up at the last day," or change them from mortal to immortal. John 6:54; 11:26; 1. Cor. 15:51, 52.

In view of such testimonies as the foregoing how useless to say that man, as he is now constituted, is immortal. And what a fearful reflection upon God to say that He created a being which, though it might fall to the lowest depth of moral degradation, is nevertheless destined to live as long as God lives; in fact, that God is not able to terminate the existence of such a rebellious being. How much more consistent is the view that immortality is for such as are worthy of it. Rom. 2:5-7; Luke 20:34-36.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NATIONS.

The Bible teaches that "nations" are to be "judged, ruled." Isa. 2:4; Rev. 2:27. Of this "government of the nations" Jesus the Christ is to be the Head, and "the immortal saints joint heirs with Him." If nations are to be governed, there must be nations to govern after the return of Christ. So we believe. If the Bible gives promise of a government of the nations under a righteous rule, as it has foretold other things which have manifestly come to pass, then we may reasonably look for such a government in the world. The prophecies already referred to (Dan. 2:44; 7:27) imply and indirectly state that such a condition will obtain; for if "all dominions shall serve and obey" the Most High, it is plain that "the government of the nations" is executed righteously. And who could the Ruler be but He upon whose shoulders the government shall be, of the increase whose government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even forever, even Jesus "the Christ?" Isa. 9:6, 7. With Him shall be those of the "little flock (Luke 12:32) for whom "the Father's good pleasure" designed "the Kingdom," as it had been appointed to Him. Luke 22:28-30.

When once the government or Kingdom is in operation it will be an attraction to the nations; they will gravitate toward the flow into it. Isa. 2:2, 4. They will say to those of Israel who will form the nucleus of the subjects. "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." Zech. 8:23, 23. "Many people and strong nations" there will be to "seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem," which shall be called "the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem." Jer. 3:17. Will there be any need of "the nations" being gathered around one common center after the coming of Christ? If the world is to be "converted" before and without this event, all this is purposeless; but if nations continue to "learn war" and create the deadly implements of destruction, as they have been and are still doing, then there is need of going some-

where to unlearn war and to learn what is true peace based upon righteousness. "He shall judge among the nations." Who? "The God of Jacob." Will He do this in person? "He hath appointed a day which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained—who is that?—whom he hath raised from the dead." Acts 17:31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations." Matth. 25:31. It is evident from the foregoing Scriptures, and manifest from conditions today, that this judgment of the nations has not yet taken place. "Peace on earth, good will to men," was sung by the angelic choir at the birth of the "Prince of peace," but the time for this peace will be when the Prince shall be in His realm; when he whose right it is (Ezek. 21:27) shall sit upon the throne of David (Luke 1:32, 33), and judge (rule) the world in righteousness. Acts 17:31. How futile are the efforts of men to bring about the conditions to be witnessed only when the Man of God's appointing shall execute judgment and justice. What a time of rejoicing it will be and what anthems of praise will ascend to "the Most High" when Jesus the "King of kings," together with His "saints" shall judge the poor of the people and save the children of the needy. Ps. 72:4, 7.

In the succession of the kingdoms of men, beginning with Babylon, and coming down to the present, the kingdoms were broken and destroyed, one after the other, to be succeeded by others, but the subjects of each kingdom continued to live, and became the subjects of the next. So with the Kingdom of God when it comes. It will "break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms" (Dan. 2:44) which at the time of its establishment shall be in existence, but this is not to be understood in the sense of destroying all the people living. I well remember how we used to be startled at the frightful pictures drawn by theologians of the destruction of the material universe to take place at the coming of Christ. No wonder that people who have such ideas associated with that glorious event, should have any but feelings of joy at its contemplation. The object, or one of the objects, of the coming of Christ is to establish the divine government on earth by means of which to bless the nations. This will be the means of fulfilling one of the items of promise made to Abraham, that "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:4. The law to govern those "nations" shall issue from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Isa. 2:3. The nations that submit to that law will enjoy the "blessings" contemplated in the plan of God, while those that refuse submission will be visited with punishments that will be adequate to the demands. Zech. 14:17, 19; Isa. 60:12.

That will be "the day of the Lord," so often referred to in Scripture, not a day of twenty-four hours, but a great day which has the seasons of "summer and winter" in it, and continues "from year to year." Zech. 14:8, 16. It is "the day of judgment and perdition of

ungodly men," mentioned in 2. Pet. 3:7, 10, and of which the apostle says, "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." v. 8. It is the day for which God's people in all ages have been looking. That will be the true millennium (from mille, one thousand; annus, years), the reign of subjugation lasting a thousand years. Then "the nations" will learn, not how to destroy one another, but the useful arts of peace—a peace which has its foundation in righteousness. This is a work for which Christ who hated iniquity and loved righteousness (Heb. 1:9) as well as "the saints" who learned righteousness in the school of suffering for the kingdom of God (2 Thess. 1:5) will be eminently fitted.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

Another subject intimately related to those treated in former chapters is the "restoration of Israel." By the term "Israel" we understand the descendants of the twelve tribes of Jacob, later named Israel. They are not now in the condition in which they once were, and are again to be.

There is no people that presents so unique a history as this people. They are an interesting people because descendants of Abraham, "the friend of God" (Isa. 41:8; Ps. 105:6), and the part they have played in the world's history, from their sojourn in Egypt down to the present. The Bible itself is a strictly Israelitish Book, for all the writers engaged in its composition were Israelites. These people among all the nations, God chose (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 32:9; Ps. 135:4) to entrust to them His oracles (Rom. 3:2), and to employ them in giving the world a revelation of His will concerning mankind. Deut. 7:7, 8; 10:15. In the land of Egypt, "the house of bondage," they learned some bitter but much needed lessons. From thence the Lord delivered them and led them "with an outstretched arm," bringing them after years of wandering in the wilderness into the land previously pledged to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession. This was apportioned among the tribes, and here they dwelt for about 500 years after entering in, until the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, when ten of the tribes refused to submit to the lawful king, and the house of Jacob was divided into two nations; one consisting of the ten tribes, being called "Israel," while the two tribes remaining loyal to the house of David, constituted the kingdom of "Judah." In this condition they continued until B. C. 721, when the northern kingdom, Israel, was invaded by the Assyrians, and the people deported to Assyria, from whence they never returned to their own land. In B. C. 607 the southern kingdom, Judah, became the subject of attack by the Babylonians, by whom the Jews were carried into Babylon, where they remained seventy years. At the expiration of this period, as predicted by the prophet Jeremiah (c. 25:12; 29:10), they were returned to the land of their fathers, but their former glory never returned to

them. To these various experiences of this people and their relation to God's purpose I ask attention in this chapter. We sing,

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;"

and this is doubly true of Israel. From among this people God purposed to raise up the Prophet like unto Moses (Deut. 18:15-19), which is Jesus of Nazareth. Acts 2:6-22. The Ruler, having "the sceptre," and Lawgiver was to come out of Judah; and many hundreds of years after this prophecy the fact is recorded "that our Lord sprang from Judah." Heb. 7:14. Bethlehem was to be the birth place of Him "That is to be Ruler in Israel." (Micah. 7:2); and at His birth the angels announced to the shepherds upon the hills of Judea, that "unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11. See also v. 4, same chapter. How applicable in every sense are the words of Paul, "Of whom (Israelites), as concerning the flesh, Christ came." Rom. 9:4, 5. I here call special attention to the literality of the fulfilment of these predictions relating to Christ.

We may here also record some of the threats made against the Israelites in case they should turn from God's commandments. The attentive reader will turn to Deut. 28, and read verses 15 to 68. Did those things literally come to pass? Not only were they visited in the land with the curses denounced against them, but the Lord also plucked them from the land whither they had gone to possess it, and scattered them "among all people, from one end of the earth, even to the other." Many had been the judgments of God upon these people up to the time of Christ; they were then only "few in number," and it was said concerning this remnant that they should "fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles (nations) until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Luke 21:24; 19:41-44. These predictions of Jesus had a most signal fulfilment in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans A. D. 70; and those relating to the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles are still in process of fulfilment. Now, if God so literally carried out His threats against this people, what reason is there for holding that His promises concerning the same people, of which there is a great abundance, should not be just as literally fulfilled? I will cite several of these promises of restoration. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set His hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Isa. 11:11, 12. Where shall they be gathered? "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with (marg. "to") the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the North to the land that I have

given for an inheritance to your fathers." Jer. 3:15. "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them from every side, and bring them into their own land." Ezek. 37:21. What is the object of this gathering? "And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be the king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Ezek. 37:22. Will they ever be removed after this gathering and establishment in their own land? "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever, and my servant David shall be their prince forever. Ezek. 37:25, 26. "And I will plant them upon their own land, and they shall be no more pulled out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord." Amos. 9:15. Nor are we confined to the Old Testament for statements relating to the restoration of Israel. We may read in the angel's message to Mary, that He (Jesus) shall be great, and shall be called to the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:30-33. The same thought finds expression in the words of Jesus to the apostles, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke 22:28-30. These Scriptures supply the inference that "the twelve tribes of Israel" had, at the time those words were spoken, not yet been regathered and restored according to the divine plan. But we are not limited to inference. The epistle of James was addressed "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad." Jas. 1:1. The time for this sitting in thrones and judging the twelve tribes of Israel is "in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory." Matt. 19:28. This sitting in the throne of his glory will be after "the Son of man shall come in his glory." Matt. 25:31. It is after their gathering into their own land, that there shall be "one King to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Ezek. 27:22.

I submit in all candor that if the threats made against Israel resulting in their scattering among the nations, were so literally and minutely carried out, why should not the promise of restoration be just as faithfully and literally fulfilled? Our God not only makes but keeps covenants. He said that for their disregard of His judgments and statutes the land should be left of them. "And yet for all that when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am their God." He made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob concerning the land of Canaan (Lev. 26:41

43), to give it to them for an everlasting possession, and this possession has never, up to the present, been enjoyed, as is evident from the frequent references to the certainty of the fulfilment of these promises. Michah. 7:20; Luke 1:72, 73; Acts 26:6, 7. Would God by His Holy prophets and His own Son inspire hopes and awaken anticipations in the minds of His people that He never intended for them to realize? What was the meaning of that anxious "looking for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38); "waiting for the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43); the "hope of the promise made of God unto the fathers?" Acts 26:6, 7. It means that God is true, though every man be false.

But why this gathering of Israel? Because they will be the first to recognize and acknowledge the rightful King, and will be the first subjects in the kingdom of God. The law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3), and thither will men of all nations go, saying to the favored ones of the house of Israel. "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." Zech. 8:20-23. That glorious time will be after the gathering of Israel; after the coming of Christ in power and great glory; after the immortalization of the righteous. Then Christ "shall reign over the house of Jacob," the twelve tribes regathered; and with Him in His Kingdom will be the saints, who, like Him, have been made perfect through trial and suffering. Heb 2:10; 1. Pet. 1:7. The eyes of multitudes of Israel to 1:11) to whom Jesus "the King of the Jews" (Matth. 2:2; 27:37) came in day are longingly turned toward their own country. "His own" (John lowly servant's form (Phil 2:7), did not acknowledge His claims, because, while they somewhat apprehended the glory of Christ, did not take into account His sufferings, of which their own prophets had spoken ages before. 1. Pet. 1:11. And the nominal church of today is committing an error equally grave and hurtful. For, although it lauds the suffering of Christ, it misapprehends "the glory that should follow" and the manner of its following. The spirit of prophecy recognizes both the sufferings and the glory.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESURRECTION.

The church of God teaches "the literal resurrection of the dead." It firmly holds that dead men are really and literally dead; and the only way in which they can live is to be made alive by a resurrection. If death is real, so is the resurrection; if it is not literal, neither is the resurrection. The Church of God insists upon teaching and emphasizing the resurrection of the dead, because this is plainly a Bible doctrine. But why use the word "literal" in connection with this subject? "Literal" is a qualifying term, and tells what kind of a "resurrection of the dead" we believe in. Literal means "according to the letter; primitive, real, not figurative or metaphorical"—Webster. So we believe in a resurrection which is according to the letter—that is, the letter of the word "resurrection." Of this the meaning is, "A rising again;

chiefly the reviving of the dead human race, or their return from the grave." Such, then, is our faith with regard to the resurrection. But why so particular, so "dogmatical?" Because there are those in the so-called "religious world" who, assuming the immortality of every human being, hold that when the so-called "immortal soul" (of which the Bible knows absolutely nothing) is released from the body, it takes its flight to heaven. And this is supposed to be a "resurrection." What is this but a denial of the Bible doctrine of the resurrection of the dead? Such a transaction as that noted is in no sense a resurrection; for it is assumed that man has a "soul" which can not die, in which case resurrection can not possibly pertain to it, since "the dead" are to be subject to "the resurrection." It is an unwarranted assumption that the souls of the good men go to heaven at death; and that, surely, is not a resurrection, a "return from the grave." And if the souls of bad men go to hell, receiving their doom immediately at death, there can be no thought of resurrection. It is because of this erroneous and very mischievous notion of the immortality of the soul and its necessary effects on vital truth, that the Church of God maintains that dead men must revive and return from the grave, and that if they do not so believe, they are "perished," even those who have "fallen asleep in Christ." 1. Cor. 15:18. It would never have been necessary to use the term "literal" in connection with "the resurrection of the dead," had not the un-Scriptural theory of immortality without and apart from Christ insinuated itself into and vitiated the doctrine of the Church. "Resurrection" would have meant resurrection "according to the letter" of that word.

I will cite a few of the many Scriptures that might be cited showing the mortality of the human race—the mortality of the man in his entirety. Take as a criterion to Scripture teaching on the subject Paul's reference to the genealogy of death, Rom. 5:12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Sin is the transgression of law, of a known commandment—disobedience. Rom. 5:19. How did it "enter into the world?" The Bible answer is, "By one man." In its wake came "death." This was not confined to the "one man," the first transgressor, but "passed through to all men," and so the entire race was involved. Was and is this death "literal?" Did Adam, and does his posterity, really "die?" The divine inhibition was, "Thou shalt not eat, for in the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die." Gen. 2:17. Adam ate of the forbidden tree. What was the result? The record says, that "Adam lived 930 years; and he died." Gen. 5:5. How was the death penalty executed? By man's expulsion from the garden and exclusion from the tree of life, "lest he eat of the tree of life and live forever." Gen. 3:22. Thus it is plain that the quality to "live forever" (which God claims for Himself. Deut. 32:40) was not inherently in Adam, but contingent upon his observance of God's righteous requirements; and as soon as he became guilty of an infraction of these, he incurred God's displeasure, and drew upon himself the pen-

alty pronounced against disobedience. It is an idle waste of time and words to say that it was Adam's "body" that died, for the record plainly says that Adam died. Adam, the man, was not to eat; he was dust; he would die; and for his sin was sentenced to return to dust. Gen. 3:19. Only corrupted teaching would evade the force of these facts by such a play upon words as here noted.

This result passed through to all men. "Man" is immortal," subject to death. Job. 4:17. And when he is dead he is totally oblivious of things past, present and future. In short, "The dead know not anything." Eccl. 9:5. It will be observed that the "resurrection" pertains to "the dead." If men do not and can not die, they have no need of a resurrection, and can not appreciate it if set before them. But let them once understand that death is the "enemy" he is said to be (1. Cor. 15:26), "the king of terrors" (Job 18:14) who reigns" over them (Rom. 5:14) until compelled by a Mighty One to yield them up, and they will know how to appreciate the meaning of the resurrection.

Another subject already alluded to in these chapters and connected with the present one, is the return of Christ. What thoughts does the mention of the coming of Christ awaken in the minds of most religious persons today? Small indeed is the number of those who, at the mention of this glorious event, do not think of the coming of the enemy death. Funeral addresses are made, and mourners are "comforted" (?) with the thought that "the Lord came and took" the persons just deceased. It is taught from the pulpit that death is the coming of Christ. That this is incorrect must at once appear to everyone who gives the most casual thought to the Lord's statement in John 21:20-23. Jesus said to Peter, who had expressed some anxiety for the disciple whom Jesus loved. "If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee? Follow thou me." What was the effect produced on the minds of the bystanders? Did they imagine that the disciple should tarry until he died? On the contrary, "the saying went abroad among the brethren that that diciple should not die." Such a calamity would be prevented if he tarried until the coming of Christ. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1. Thess. 4:16, 17. Of this resurrection Christ is "the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 1. Cor. 15:23. According to these Scriptures there can be no resurrection until the coming of Christ. He is "the resurrection and the life." John 11:25. "Christ our life" is to "appear." Then they who are his shall "appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4), "be like him" (1. John 3:2), "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21), be "partakers of the divine nature." 2. Pet. 1:4.

May we attain unto the resurrection from among dead ones (Phil. 3:11), and have a part in the first resurrection. Rev. 20:5,6.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED.

The Church of God, unlike almost the whole of modern "Christianity," teaches "the final destruction of the wicked." It is admitted that sin is an evil, that its punishment will effect the sinner in some way or another, and that the Bible threatens the finally wicked with "destruction." But not all are agreed that this destruction, when denounced against the sinner, properly means what that word conveys when applied to other subjects. Some, inheriting the belief in the immortality of the soul, and unable to escape from the logic of this view, hold that the sinner must be tormented for his sins world without end. While others, falling in with the spacious arguments of Universalism, go to the other extreme, and say that sin will receive some kind of punishment, yet the sinner himself will at last be thoroughly purged by the purgatorial fires of "judgment," and all men will finally be "restored to the unity and fitness of things," as set forth by Origen, the father of Universalism. Both systems are equally wide of the mark, for while the one unduly emphasises the severity of the punishment of sin, the other exalts the goodness of God out of all proportion with his justice; and both take a false view of the language employed in Scripture denouncing against rebellious creatures their just and final doom. The one claims that the term destroy conveys the idea of torment, and since qualified by such adjectives as "everlasting," the torment of those persons must therefore be endless. The other contends that destruction means the eradication from the sinner of those propensities, while in the end the sinner himself will escape untouched. These are the two extremes of religious teaching as to the final disposition of the wicked. They can not possibly both be right; one or the other must be wrong; in fact, both are wrong. The Church of God holds that they are alike erroneous and un-Scriptural. The one puts a blot upon God because it attributes to Him the creation of a being which, though it may rise to the greatest height of assumption and rebellion, and sink to the lowest depth of moral degradation, is nevertheless destined to live as long as God lives, though consigned to an eternity of excruciating torment; while the other minimizes the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and in addition to this violates the plainest requirements of language by saying that God will destroy sin, when He has plainly announced that He will destroy the sinner. The Church of God teaches "the final destruction of the wicked." Why? Because the Lord says that "all the wicked will he destroy." Ps. 145:20. If destruction, when threatened against "all the wicked," means endless torment, why did not God so announce to the world? Or if it means that He will only destroy their wickedness, who can tell but He will only "preserve" the love of "them that love him," while they themselves are not at all concerned? The only reasonable way to determine this matter is to ascertain the historical meaning of terms as they are employed in Scripture. If, according to

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this rule, "destruction" means torment, we are obliged to accept it; if it means the destruction of something else than the subject of destruction, as in the case of the wicked, we are bound to take this view. "Words should be used in their primary or historical sense, and in the meaning in which they can be proven historically to have been used." This is a fundamental principle of Scripture interpretation as well as law; and we contend that departure from this rule is responsible for much of the false teaching which we hear at the present day.

It will be well to observe that we believe in "the final destruction of the wicked," that is, their destruction will be final; there will be nothing beyond it to reverse it, as in the case of the obedient, their salvation will be "final." "What shall be the end (the final outcome) of them that obey not the gospel of God?" 1. Pet. 4:17. What does this gospel offer to men? Eternal life. On what condition? On condition of faith and obedience. John 3:16; Heb. 5:9. What will be the end of those who refuse to obey the gospel of Christ, whose god is their stomach, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things? Paul solemnly avers that the END of such is "destruction." Phil. 3:18, 19. Thus it is seen that the destruction of this class is final.

We will now consider a number of instances where "destroy" is applied to objects inanimate as well as animate. It was said to the Israelites, "Ye shall drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and pluck down all their high places." Num. 33:52. See 2. Kings 21:3. God threatened to "destroy" chariots. Micah 5:10. "Thus saith the Lord: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of the land of Memphis." Ezek. 30:13. Here, then, are pictures, molten images, high places, chariots, and idols, that were subject to "destruction." They could not have been tormented in the common acceptation of the term, for such objects are insensible of suffering. They could not undergo the purging process of "judgment" contended for by Universalism, for they did not possess those mental and moral characteristics that needed correction. Destruction, cessation of being, as in Ezek. 30:13, was the object of this procedure.

Animate objects, men, were destroyed. Jehu invited all the prophets, servants, and priests of Baal together, "that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal." 2. Kings 10:19. What was done with them? Were they tormented, or were they subjected to the refining fires of "judgment?" Neither of the two. The record tells us that they were slain, smitten with the sword. v. 25. This was their destruction. In Dan. 2:12, the king of Babylon threatened to "destroy all the wise men of Babylon," because they were unable to tell and interpret the king's dream. How was this threat understood by Daniel? Did it mean that they were to be tormented for their inability to solve the king's problem? Or did he suppose they were to be subject to a series of purgatorial judgments which would eventually

remove the existing ignorance from the minds of those men? On the contrary, he knew it meant that all concerned would "perish" if the order should be executed. y. 18. And hence his entreaty to "destroy not the wise men of Babylon." v. 24.

One more example. By reference to Gen. 18:23, 28, 31, 32, 35; 19:13, 14, 17; Luke 17:29, it will be seen that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were "destroyed," the destroying agency in this instance being fire. Now, it must be perfectly plain that those persons are neither agonizing and cursing God, nor are they passing through a refining process which will convert them at last into "shame-clad sinners over whom angels will rejoice." They were destroyed. And they are still, though unconsciously, "undergoing the decree of aionian fire" (Jude 7), "an example unto them that after should live ungodly." 2. Pet. 2:6.

CHAPTER IX.

ETERNAL LIFE ONLY THROUGH CHRIST.

The Church of God teaches, upon the authority of the Word of God, that eternal life is a gift bestowed through Christ upon those who are worthy, and not a natural possession of man through Adam.

Life, in the abstract, is "that condition of a plant or an animal in which its organs are capable of performing their functions." Life is at the basis of all enjoyment and all suffering. A dead man can neither enjoy nor suffer. To be capable of either, a man must live; the organs which collectively constitute himself, must be capable of performing their functions.

Life, in Scripture, is frequently qualified as "eternal" and "everlasting." The former is used thirty times, the latter fourteen times; in the New Testament. Both adjectives are from the Greek *aionios*, which is from the noun *aion* or *aionos*. The use of the adjective is to qualify the life in question. Otherwise there would be no use to say "eternal" or "everlasting life;" it would suffice to simply say "life." What is meant by this term? The Greek writers used the adjective *aionios* to designate things which were either of indefinite or unlimited duration. Mr. J. B. Rotherham, in a foot note on John 3:16, in his emphasised New Testament, says, "It is most important to remember that age is not the primary meaning of *aion*: rather duration indefinitely extended. Moreover, it seems to be clothed with this more primitive significance, that the qualifying word *aionios* comes into use. The noun and the adjective are in perfect accord; both have in them the spirit of the famous plural itself (ages of ages), which is simply a more vivid expression of the same idea. He that hath *aionian* life, lives to the *aion*—to the remotest age—; in fact, to the ages of ages. Indefinite extension is stamped on all these expressions: *aionios* refuses to be bounded; as soon as you see the end of a thing, *aionios* becomes inapplicable thereto. To *aionian* punishment (Matth. 25: 46) no conclusion can be assigned; if it be essentially a conscious endurance to the subject of it, then it must be as long as consciousness

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itself remains; if essentially a punishment of loss, it can not be said that it will ever be exchanged for gain. . . . The Hebrew (*olam*) starts from the notion of concealed, the Greek from that of continuous duration indefinitely prolonged." From all of which it is clear that *aionios* used adjectively has reference to duration, to time, and when *aionian* life is promised or hoped for (Titus 1:2; 1. John 2:15), it is a life which is unlimited in duration—endless.

That man does not now possess eternal or endless life is very clear. He does not live forever (Gen. 3:22), but is of few days and full of trouble. Job 14:1. There is nothing in his natural and moral constitution which entitles him to, or guarantees to him, eternal life. If he ever enjoys this blessing, so as to live forever (See John 6:40, 47, 51, 58), it will be because it has been given him by God. It is a gift, not a natural possession. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23. Here we notice (a) the gift, "eternal life; (b) the Giver, God; (c) the recipient of the gift, man who needs it; (d) the Medium through which the gift is conveyed, Jesus Christ our Lord; (e) the conditions, if any, of the reception of the gift. The gift is in the power of the Giver, who can give or withhold it according to His pleasure. He can make its reception conditional or unconditional. That its reception is conditional, and therefore not to be granted to men indiscriminately, must appear to every thoughtful person. True, eternal life is a "gift." However, this by no means argues that it will be given to all men without distinction. The Scriptures clearly and emphatically forbid such a conclusion. "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 5:21. Here eternal life is traced to grace, or favor, which reigns through righteousness. Righteousness pertains to the character and conduct of the persons who receive the grace; in other words, upon the proper relations between themselves and God. Justification from past sins enters into this relation. This finds its basis, first of all, in the favor of God, But secondarily also in the faith and obedience of the one seeking to be justified. Rom. 6:16; Phil. 3:9. Faith is the principle upon which God justifies. Rom. 3:22, 24, 30; 4:5, 23, 24; 5:1, 9; Gal. 2:16; 3:8. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6. Justifying faith is not without works. Jas. 2:20-26. These are acts of obedience. Obedience is "unto righteousness." Rom. 6:18. Such obedience makes free from sin. Then when one is freed from sin, he becomes a servant of righteousness. Being free from sin, the fruit is unto holiness, and the end (the final outcome) is everlasting life.

The fact that this is due of God's favor does not prove that eternal life will be indiscriminately bestowed. That "grace of God teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." Titus 2:11, 12. An inspired apostle besought the brethren at Corinth not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2. Cor. 6:1. And in thus beseeching

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them, he styles himself and others as "workers together" with God. The work of God to those persons in the proclamation of the gospel was one of grace or favor. This they had received. 1. Cor. 15:1, 11. But they were to exercise care lest they should receive the grace of God in vain, or to no purpose. This grace might be "frustrated," set aside, or made ineffective, by an improper attitude toward it. Gal. 2:21. Men can "fall from grace." Gal. 6:4; Heb. 12:15. And it is possible to do "despite unto the Spirit of grace." Heb. 10:29. Grace is to reign through righteousness unto eternal life; but where it is received in vain, to no purpose; or turned into lasciviousness (Jude 4) where men fall from it by clinging to something else; where its teaching is disregarded or neglected and its purpose frustrated, it can not be said to "reign" in any sense of the word, and the necessary result must be, that eternal life, the reception of which is suspended upon these conditions, can not be granted. There were those at Antioch in Pisidia who "judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life." Acts 13:46. The context says that "they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." This attitude toward the Word of God caused the apostle to "turn unto the Gentiles" at that place. Those who by such open hostility judged themselves unworthy of or unfit for everlasting life will not be counted worthy to have a part in that resurrection, the participants in which shall not die any more, being the children of God because the children of the resurrection. Luke 20:34-36. "The life is in the Son" (1. John 5:9-11), that is, the "everlasting life;" and therefore "he that hath the Son hath life; but he that hath not the Son hath not life."

Here let me warn the reader against a very mischievous error which is entertained with much tenacity. It is assumed, taught, and believed that the real man is so-called "immortal soul," and that this "soul" continues in a state of consciousness after the dissolution of the body. If this view be correct, then it is not true that "eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23), but the quality to live forever is derived from Adam. And if perpetuity of being is derived from Adam, man lives forever whether there be a Jesus Christ or no, and in this way the honor which the Father intended to place upon His Son is given to another. John 5:23.

If none, not even the righteous, are now actually in possession of eternal life, when shall this blessing be received? "In the world to come eternal life." Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30. Two periods of time are contrasted: "This time" and "the world to come." "The children of this world (implying that there is or will be another "world") marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Luke 20:34-36. As long as men and women are married and given in marriage, they are in "this

world," aion, or age. So long they can die. They have not yet been counted worthy by the proper Authority, and it behoves them to "walk worthy." Eph. 4:1. The present world will have an "end." Then another world will obtain. The coming of the Son of man will end the one and introduce the other. The resurrection of those that are Christ's will take place "at his coming." 1. Cor. 15:23. They are raised incorruptible. v. 52. The living are changed from mortality to immortality. Then as the apostle said, "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1. Cor. 15:54, 55. "Our vile body" itself shall be the subject of a "change" so thorough and so glorious. Phil. 3:20, 21. That will be a life which is everlasting—endless, and will correspond with an everlasting kingdom, everlasting possession, everlasting inheritance, and everlasting glory. Only God is able to bring about such an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

CHAPTER X.

THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.

The Church of God advocates, among other things to be observed as "prerequisites of the forgiveness of sins," a "heartly belief of the gospel." That such belief is a very essential matter, is clear from the fact that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. 11:6. It is a basic principle in the economy of God. "Faith" has to do with "things" that are "not seen" but "hoped for," and is the "conviction," the confidence, that those "things" will become matters of experience and enjoyment. "Hope" and "conviction" can only exist where there is a promise. Those who are "strangers from the covenants of promise, have no hope, and are without God in the world." Eph. 2:12. Faith is promulgated and imparted to persons "by hearing" (or report), and this is "by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17. Such faith is not an undefined and indefinable abstraction, as the exhortation frequently addressed to "seekers" at the mourners' bench: "Only believe," without specifying what to believe; but can be submitted to the understanding of persons in plain Scriptural propositions which mean something and convey information about God's plan of the ages. According to Paul, "There is one faith." Eph. 4:5. This being true, there should be no great difficulty in determining what that faith is, especially since there is also but one object of faith—one gospel. Gal. 1:6-9.

The faith, then, that is required as a condition to salvation, is "the faith of the gospel." Phil. 1:27. Since one gospel gives ground It is "the gospel" which Jesus Christ commanded to be preached to It is "the gospel" which Jesus Christ commanded to be preached to every creature, supplemented by the statement, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Mark 16:15, 16. It is "this gospel of the kingdom" which Jesus said should be "preached in all the world as

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a witness unto all nations." Matt. 24:14. It is the same gospel in the promulgation of which He set the pace in Galilee (Matt. 4:23), and which the disciples, afterward apostles, learned of Him. Luke 8:1. This gospel He sent them to preach, which they did. Luke 9:1, 2, 6. The conversation between the risen Lord and His disciples, in the interim between His resurrection and ascension concerned "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts 1:3. This was also prominent in Peter's discourse on Pentecost. Acts 2:22-38. Philip's preaching at Samaria consisted of "the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." Acts 8:5, 12. At the house of Cornelius Peter gave his full endorsement to "the word which God sent unto the children of Israel...preaching peace by Jesus Christ." Acts 10:36-39. At Ephesus Paul "went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months reasoning and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." And when the opposition of "divers" ones made further labors at the synagogue impossible, he repaired "to the school of one Tyrannus and continued for the space of two years." Acts 19:8, 10. He afterwards reminded the elders of the Ephesian Church, that he had "gone preaching the kingdom of God, testifying the gospel of the grace of God" among them. Acts 20:24, 25. To the brethren at Rome he expressed a willingness "to preach the gospel" at that city also. Rom. 1:15. And when opportunity afforded, he was there "testifying the kingdom of God." Later he made arrangements to have persons meet him at his own hired house, and he "received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus with all confidence." Acts 28:23, 31. Thus we see the character of apostolic preaching. Who would deny or call in question the statement that the teaching of the early Church not only included, but to a considerable extent consisted of "the things concerning the kingdom of God?" Who can doubt that those who had any faith in the apostles, believed the simple message they announced of the kingdom to be inherited by the saints at the coming of Christ? Paul lauded the faith of the Thessalonians saying that it was a generally known fact that they had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." 1. Thess. 1:9, 10. Such was the effect of apostolic preaching on the minds of those persons. They had been assured of the coming of the Son of man from heaven, and that, if they patiently endured persecutions and tribulations, they should be "counted worthy of the kingdom of God," for which (not in which) they also suffered. Thus they would be recompensed for their troubles" when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven." 2. Thes. 1:5-7.

In full view of all this and much more that might be said, we are demanded whether it makes any difference what we believe. We surely can not believe what has not been promised. "The spirit of faith" says, "I have believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" (2. Cor. 4:12) the things which we be-

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lieve. To believe the gospel is to believe what the gospel says or promises. If that promise were, that good people, when they die, shall go to heaven, then "the faith of the gospel" would be to accept such statement. If the promise of the gospel to those who love God is a kingdom (Luke 22:29, 30; Jas. 2:5), "on the earth." (Rev. 5:10), then the belief of these things, together with becoming conduct, constitutes that faith. If you are not particular as to what you believe, and your faith has no purpose, you may believe what you please, and it matters little what it is; but if you are concerned about your salvation, then accept the gospel which God caused to be announced by His Son Jesus Christ, which gospel is on record that men may read, understand and obey it, and thereby be saved. Remember you are dealing with God, who has chosen the gospel as the means of calling men to the glory and kingdom of His Son. 1. Thess. 2:12; 2. Thess. 2:14.

The Church of God holds that such faith of the gospel is one the prerequisites of the forgiveness of sins, and means to "stand fast in one Spirit, with one mind striving for the faith of the gospel." Phil. 1:27. He who disbelieves the gospel, discredits God, and tacitly makes Him a liar, thereby showing that he has neither confidence in God nor faith in His arrangement for his salvation. He rejects Jesus Christ because he rejects the words which were spoken by Him (John 12:47-50), which announce the gospel, and are words of eternal life. John 6:68. In short, he makes inoperative the very plan inaugurated by God for his salvation. He can not, in that condition, obtain forgiveness of sins.

Reader, can you afford to treat this matter lightly? Jesus says "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be shamed, when he shall come in his glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." Luke 9:26. Paul was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," for he saw in it "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1:16. Let us see that we are "in the faith" (2. Cor. 13:5); then "continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22); "keep the faith" (2. Tim. 4:7), and with all who love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall receive the crown of righteousness and have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2. Tim. 2:8; 2. Pet. 1:11.

CHAPTER XI.

REPENTANCE.

In addition to "a hearty belief of the gospel," the Church of God urges repentance as one of the "prerequisites of the forgiveness of sins." The fact that we do not practice the so-called "altar services," in vogue in modern "revivals," by no means proves that we do not believe in repentance. I dare say that none insist more earnestly than do our public speakers, on a thorough repentance. There is not a truth or doctrine set forth in the Word of God which has not its place, and which should not, in its proper place, be enforced. This

also applied to the subject of repentance. While we thoroughly believe in repentance as set forth in the Scriptures, we do not believe that what is by many termed repentance, is such. We hold that an act so essential to the forgiveness of sins, should be understandingly and properly performed. Repentance, as other acts to be performed in obedience to God's requirements, is a matter of the intellect, and properly consists of a change of thought, mind, purpose, and life. In the *Emphatis Diaglott* the original word *metanoia* is given as "reformation." Considered by itself, to repent means to change one's mind, as the following examples will show. God would not lead the children of Israel, while on the way from Egypt to Canaan, through the land of the Philistines, lest pre-adventure the people repent when they see war." Ex. 13:17. If the Israelites "repented," they would change their minds about going to Canaan, and would go back "to Egypt." Another example is the parable of the man who had two sons, who said one of these, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." The son said, "I will not," but "afterward he repented and went." When he repented, what did he do? He changed his mind, took a second thought; and having done this, he "went" according to his father's commandment. Matth. 21:28, 29. In Heb. 7:21 we read, "The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." If the Lord will not repent of this announcement, He will not change His mind. These examples show the use and meaning of the word repent. The command to "repent," is addressed to sinners. They are called upon to change their minds and reform their lives. Repentance and remission of sins are mentioned together, as for instance, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his (Jesus') name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:47. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19. From these citations it is evident that without repentance remission of sins is impossible. Man is a sinner, and as such he can not please God. "They that are in the flesh can not please God." Rom. 6:6-8. In order to please God, man must "cease to do evil; learn to do well." Isa. 1:16, 17. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 1. Cor. 6:9, 10. The evil practices here mentioned must be abandoned by those who desire an entrance into the Kingdom of God. Repent, turn away from sin, turn unto God; in short, reform your manner of thought and action. "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring (lead, introduce) us to God." 1. Pet. 3:18. But of this we may be assured, that without breaking off sinful habits, and becoming efforts on our part, the "bringing" here mentioned will not be accomplished. In this process "the Just" brings us out of sinful thoughts and ways into the path of virtue, so that we retrace our steps and go back "unto God." A popular error is that repentance consists of sorrow. According to the Scriptures "godly sorrow worketh (produces, results in) repentance" (2. Cor. 7:10); the latter grows out of such sorrow. Even the apostle Paul "did repent" when certain sinful practices of

persons in the Corinthian church were brought to his notice. v. 8. Did he not, when he repented, change his mind about those persons? He had thought they were doing well in their religious life; and when this report came to him, he "repented," changed his mind concerning them, and wrote them, a sharp letter. This letter made them "sorry after a godly manner," a "sorrow to repentance," which "wrought" a full clearing of themselves in the matter in question. Sorrow because of sin is a vital element, but it must not stop here. There must be "works meet for repentance." Acts 26:20. The proper motive of repentance is not to be sought in the preaching of hell fire torments as is done at "revivals" where the sinner is "shaken over the pit and filled with groundless fears, until he breaks out in agonizing cries, he knows not what for. In Scripture "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Rom. 2:4. But has not God threatened to punish the wicked if they do not turn from their evil ways? Most certainly. The goodness of God devised and offered to poor sinful man a way of escape from sin and its results. Eternal life in an endless Kingdom is offered to mortals on condition that they turn from their sins to God and to His will. But if the sinner despises the richness of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, and after his hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto himself wrath unto the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, he shall receive according to his works. Rom. 2:4-9; 1:32. While sin is "unto death;" this being universally applicable, repentance is "unto life." This latter was the verdict of the rather exclusive brethren at Jerusalem to whom Peter related that God had given to the Gentiles "the like gift:" Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:11-18. The "life" which is the ultimate object of repentance, is eternal life, which Jesus will give to the true believers at the last day, when he raises his sleeping ones from the dead and changes the living from mortality to immortality, so that they may "never die." John 11:26. Sin is an abhorrence to God, an tends to corruption and death. Where there is, through repentance, a cessation of the practices of sin, there is so much progress toward this life. Let these first steps be followed by a life of faith and godliness, and life, eternal life, will be the result through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER XII.

BAPTISM.

It was shown in former chapters that "a hearty belief of the gospel" and "repentance" constitute two of the essential elements as prerequisites of the forgiveness of sins." But a third is mentioned in our statement of belief, viz.: "Immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Perhaps a word on the term "prerequisite" is in order. This is from pre, meaning before, and requiro, to demand, ask; hence prerequisite, something previously required. "Forgiveness of sins" is the object desired; "belief of the gospel, re-

penitance, and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ," are "prerequisites," things required before "forgiveness of sins" can be obtained. This the Church of God believes and teaches. But bear in mind, these "requirements," though insisted upon by the Church of God, did not originate with that body. The Church has no authority to make rules or regulations for either its members or those desiring to become such. We insist upon the observance of these things because they are authorized and commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and any rule or requirement of which He is not the Author, can not be considered as having any binding force. If He, speaking God's words, requires men to believe the gospel, as announced by Himself, repent of their sins, and be immersed in His name, in order to the forgiveness of sins, the Church is obliged to accept these requirements and insist upon their obedience. It has no right to either omit or change that which has been commanded.

It is admitted that faith of some kind, and repentance, whatever that may be, are necessary to the remission of sins. But it is not so generally admitted that baptism is essential to the obtainment of pardon, notwithstanding Jesus said, "He that believeth (the gospel) and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), and Peter said, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, every one of you." Acts 2:37, 38. That baptism pertains to, and has something to do with salvation, is evident from the statement, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." And the apostles and early Christians so understood the matter. True, we know of many who have either not been baptized at all, or have substituted something else for baptism, who yet claim to be Christians. The writer has in mind one who frequently said, in testimony meetings, that he had been "serving the Lord for forty years," and yet he had never been baptized. If it is possible for men to be Christians and "serve the Lord" for many years or a life time without baptism, then he Lord betrayed a woeful lack of wisdom when he commanded that believers of the gospel shall be baptized in order to be saved. And the apostles were laboring under the same difficulty, for they manifestly understood the Lord to mean that men should be baptized in order to salvation. It has been suggested, "Might not Peter have meant to say, Be baptized because your sins have been forgiven?" Let us see. If this was the motive of baptism, what would it do for those who should submit to it? Would it be an evidence that their sins were forgiven? Not so, for in that case baptism would follow forgiveness, and they must needs be conscious of such forgiveness before being baptized. Moreover, if baptized because their sins were forgiven, they would also be required to repent because of forgiveness of sins. For the conjunction "and" binds repentance and baptism together, placing the one in the same relation to remission of sins as the other. If, therefore, repentance is "for the remission of sins," so is baptism; hence there can be no remission of sins until God's requirements are fully met. But it is objected, "What will you do with so many good peo-

ple who have not been baptized and yet are Christians? Are they still sinners because they have not been baptized?" To this objection we reply, What will you do with God and His requirements? Can anyone rightfully claim to be a Christian who either ignores or rejects God's means of salvation? What are we that we should dictate terms of pardon, or imagine that we have been pardoned if we have not complied with the terms of pardon? We are called upon to "obey the gospel," and to announce "the obedience of the faith" (Rom. 1:5) to others; and only to those who render such obedience from the heart (Rom. 6:17) can we hold out the hope that Jesus will be to them the Author of eternal salvation. Heb. 5:9. If obedience is required, and baptism is an element of such obedience, I ask, How can any one hope to be saved who does not obey God in baptism. There is a tendency in our day to be what is styled "liberal," which amounts to this: "You admit that I am right, and I will admit that you are right. Let us lay aside such little matters as baptism. You are right that baptism is essential, and I am equally right that it is immaterial. Let us be liberal." If "liberaliy," or that indefinable thing now-a-days so much in evidence—"charity"—were the only consideration upon which this matter hinges, we could afford to throw the entire gospel arrangement with its conditions and obligations, overboard, and set up a standard of our own, but this matter has not been submitted to poor, erring mortals to decide by a majority vote. There is One "with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13), who has taken great pains and provided ample means to fully inform us as to His intentions, so that we need not grope in darkness, nor guess what might be the right thing to do and then hope it may come out right at last. The existing confusion lies in the religious teaching of the day. It is sought to quiet the minds of the people on this subject by saying that baptism is "not essential," and even when admitting that it sustains some kind of relation to our salvation, the people are told that it matters not how they are baptized, as if they could be baptized any number of ways. When it was said, "The priest shall take of the oil, and pour it into his own left hand: and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord" (Lev. 14:15, 16), no one, including the religious teachers, has any doubt as to what those persons were to do. Three different words were used to convey so many different ideas. In the LXX they are cheo, baptizo, and rhantizo respectively. It would not make good sense to use them interchangeably. And this pertains to a transaction which was of comparatively little importance. Yet such care was exercised to supply the proper word lest there should be a misunderstanding. Can we, in view of this presume to say that when directions were given as to an act relating to the salvation of men and women, the matter has been stated so indefinitely, that human preference, notion or whim can decide as to what should be done? When directions were given

to the Israelitish priest to pour oil into his left hand, he knew what that meant; when he was told to dip his right finger in the oil, he knew better than to sprinkle oil on his finger, and when told to sprinkle, he sprinkled. But as to the word "dip." Really, how did it look when the man dipped his finger in the oil? Did he not lower his finger until it was in the oil? This will be freely granted. Now, if a command were given to dip a man, would not reason tell us that the man, like the finger, must be lowered, let or put down, until he is in the water? And since such a command has been given with reference to man, is it not the proper thing to dip (baptizo) the man in the water, instead of putting the water on the man, either by pouring or sprinkling? It is a fact, not generally known, that in every instance in the Greek New Testament where a preposition is used connecting water with baptism, it is the word in, thus: "I indeed baptize you in water." It is the same as when it is said that John baptized in the river of Jordan." Mark 1:5. Rotheram (Presb) renders baptizo into English by "immerse," and the Emphatic Diaglott by "dip." These are a few reasons of the many why the Church of God advocates "immersion in the name of Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XIII.

BAPTISM—(CONTINUED).

What was said in the last chapter concerning Lev. 14:15, 16 is further strengthened by the fact that in the Hebrew, as well as in the LXX (the O. T. Greek), three different words are employed. They are yatsaq, pour; tabal, dip; and nazah, sprinkle, in the order here given. The second of these, tabal, is found sixteen times in the Old Testament, and is given as "dip" fifteen times, and "plunge" once. To the Hebrew people it had no other meaning than this; and if they wished to convey the idea of pouring or sprinkling, they used different words to do so. In addition to this, will the reader look up the following Scriptures where the Greek word for "dip" is either bapso or embapso: Matth. 26:23; Mark 14:20; Luke 16:24; John 13:26. If the root verb baptoo here means to dip, as given in our Authorized Version, why should not the same word, when used with reference to men and women, have the same meaning? Cheo is the Greek word for pour, and is the original of the following: John 2:15; Acts 2:17, 18; 10:45, and others. Rhantizo has been translated "sprinkle." See Heb. 9:13, 19:21; 10:22; 1. Pet. 1:2. Baptizo is never, in any place in the Bible, translated sprinkle or pour, neither are choe or rhantizo translated baptize. There is nothing in the Bible or history to contradict the proposition that immersion, and that alone, constituted and was regarded as baptism in the days of the apostles. The ordinance has, as John Calvin said, been "changed." Said he, "Sprinkling a little water on a person is as good as immersion, and the Church had the right to change the ordinance to suit herself." Paul praised the Corinthian brethren for keeping the ordinances as he had delivered them. 1. Cor. 11:2. Little apostolic praise would be forthcoming

could Paul and other Apostles witness the reckless departure, in doctrine and practice, in our day, from the primitive order. What Mr. Calvin styles "the right to change the ordinance" of baptism is nothing else than unauthorized and wicked tampering with God's order. There is not one shred of evidence on record in the Scriptures that the Church was ever authorized to "change" any "ordinance" of God.

There is another line of thought to which I invite the reader's attention. Man is mortal, condemned to death, because he is a sinner; but God in His goodness has provided a way of escape from the power of the "enemy." He has "given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26), and has delegated to him the power to give eternal life (John 17:2) to those who put faith in Him. John 20:31. To obtain life, even length of days forever and ever (Ps. 21:4), it was necessary that Jesus should obey the Father's will "as far as death, the death of the cross." Phil. 2:8. And "in that he died, he died unto sin once." Likewise the believer is to reckon himself to be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:10:11. To what period does the apostle trace this "reckoning?" To baptism into Jesus Christ. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. 6:3, 4. By being buried with Christ in baptism, planted together in the likeness of his death, the believer not only expresses faith in the death; burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a fact; but confesses that he himself is a mortal, justly condemned to death, who, when dead, is wholly devoid of life; and unless God, who raised Christ from the dead, should intervene, he should forever remain in that condition. He thereby sets forth his unqualified acceptance of God's arrangement to give him life. As some who went to John for baptism, he "justifies God." Luke 7:29. Then, upon hearty obedience to the faith (Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 16:17) God, in turn, "justifies the ungodly" (Rom. 4:5), even "him that believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:23-25. "Without the shedding of blood (which involves sacrifice, the giving of life) there is no remission." Heb. 9:22. The blood of Christ was "shed for many for the remission of sins." Matth. 26:28. "Faith in his blood" is required. Rom. 3:25. This faith must be expressed by obedience, and that obedience is shown by being voluntarily baptized in the likeness of Christ's death to walk henceforth in newness of life. When these requirements are complied with God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Thus is baptism related to "the remission of sins." The apostles not only so understood the matter, but also thus presented it to others.

The question is sometimes asked, "Can we by faith, repentance, and baptism change God's mind or attitude toward us? Can we make Him willing to forgive our sins?" We can not change God's mind toward us by anything we can do. What is his mind toward us? Is it anything but pity for our lost condition, and a desire and willingness to

save us? He calls on the wicked to "forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. 55:7. God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. Hence, nothing that we could do, as originating with ourselves, is needed to change God's mind toward us. But we need to change our minds toward Him, and fall in with His thoughts and ways by humble obedience to his just demands. We did not originate the gospel plan of salvation. It comes from God, and when we submit to Him, we show our approval and acceptance of His beneficent design. "If we confess our sins (Matth. 3:6, and forsake them. Prov. 28:13) he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1. John 1:9; Acts 22:14.

It is plain at once that baptism is for such who believe the gospel, and for them only. No instances are recorded where non-believers or infants (the latter of whom are incapable of either belief or unbelief) were baptized. True, households were baptized, but in nearly every instance it is said that these households "believed" and were baptized. But above all, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," and not, "He that is baptized and afterward believeth shall be saved." The apostasy, foreseen and predicted by the apostles, is responsible for the departure from the early simplicity in faith and practice, and even the reformation was not able to efface many of the errors which had so deeply imbedded themselves in the public mind. These errors, including baby sprinkling, still linger, and it is even regarded as a mark of impiety to honestly call in question certain unauthorized religious practices. The writer knows how difficult it is to break away from well established lines of error, having undergone the ordeal of passing out of traditional and systematized error into the light of God's revealed truth. Let us know and obey the truth for ourselves. This alone can make us "free indeed."

CHAPTER XIV.

BAPTISM—(CONCLUDED).

It is admitted by all and denied by none who have knowledge of the facts, that the primitive and apostolic "mode" of baptism (a word which is frequently though erroneously introduced into the controversy on this question), was by an immersion of the entire person in water. That the meaning of baptizo is "to immerse, dip, or plunge," is not only a matter of lexical definition by all the lexicons, but is evident from the use to which it was put. If men, using the Greek language, wished to speak of the sinking of ships, they employed the word baptizo, as there was no other word in that tongue that so fitly expressed the idea of immersion as this word. Thus Josephus, the Jewish historian, speaks of a cowardly pilot who wished to end his life by sinking (ebaptisen) his ship. B. J. 3:8, 5. He also in another place speaks of the ship bearing the fugitive prophet Jonah, and says that it

was "in danger of sinking" (ebaptisen), Jos. Ant. 9:10, 2. It must at once appear that that pilot could not end his life by sprinkling or pouring a little water on the deck of the ship, but if he should sink the vessel, he would sink with it, and drown in the waves. Neither was there any particular danger to the prophet Jonah as long as only a little water was poured or sprinkled on the ship, but should the latter be baptized (immersed), it would endanger, if not cost, the lives of all on board. This is only a sample of how the word baptizo was applied by writers using the Greek language. The Church of God rejects sprinkling or pouring water on persons as being no baptism at all, since these acts are expressed by entirely different words. "Pour," rendered into Greek, would be cheo; "sprinkle" would be rhanthizo, and "dip" baptizo.

Neither pouring nor sprinkling conforms to the ideas set forth in many instances where baptism is mentioned. Paul said, "We are buried with him by baptism. . . . Planted together in the likeness of his death." Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12. Any seed that is "planted" is "buried," placed in the ground or water, covered, out of sight. Persons who are buried at sea are sunk, immersed in the waters. No element could have been chosen that would so fitly represent a burial and resurrection, as water. Here both the candidate and the person baptizing go "down into the water" to a convenient depth, and the former is laid in the water until covered with it, being for the time excluded from the vital atmosphere, in a recumbent position like a person who is buried, not forward. Then he is brought upward, emerging from the water like one being raised from the grave. Moreover, when Jesus commanded his apostles to go and baptize believers of the gospel, He gave orders to baptize the persons, and not to rhanthize the water upon them. It is impossible to sprinkle living men and women. Before this could be done, they would have to be reduced to ashes. If the water is sprinkled upon them, they are not sprinkled, but merely besprinkled. Thus, according to the Greek, Moses "besprinkled (errhanthisen) both the book and all the people." Heb. 9:19.

It is said in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that the former requested that Lazarus might dip (bapsee) the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue. Luke 16:24. What would one do carrying out such a request? Would he sprinkle a little water on his finger? How foolish such a question seems. And yet it is no more foolish than the idea advanced in all seriousness in the religious world, that to baptize means to sprinkle or pour a little water upon persons. That this position will not bear the light of investigation, is clear from the fact that men have become so "charitable" as to pronounce sprinkling, pouring, immersion, forward or backward, once, twice, or three times, by the name of "baptism" without any distinction. At a "baptism" of which the writer has knowledge nearly all these so-called "modes" were employed and called baptism. Either the Lord has given commands to His people that are capable of so many dif-

ferent constructions, or there is something wrong in the execution of these commands. When we analyze the situation we find the confusion on this subject as great as on the question, "What is the gospel?" With one it is this; with another that; with few anything positive or specific. We are demanded to be "charitable," but with all good intentions we can not call that gospel which is "not gospel, but a perversion of the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6-8), and baptism that which is not baptism, but something else. "Charity suffereth long," yet "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." 1. Cor. 13:6. There are some demands upon charity which even the best of intentions can not gratify. And the question of baptism in an instance of this kind. There are "clergymen" who preach and argue against immersion, and yet to either hold or gain those coming within the sphere of their influence, they immerse. How inconsistent such a course seems. Either immersion is baptism or it is not. If it is, why argue against it? If not, why practice it? If it is baptism, why sprinkle water upon persons instead of baptizing them "in water," as the Scripture examples we have record of plainly show?

Sometimes persons apply for "membership" in the Church of God who claim they have been baptized in other churches, who wish to be "taken in" in that way. Now, I admit this is a rather delicate question to deal with, and yet we cannot afford to allow "charity," so-called, to run away with our better judgment. We are dealing with God's truth and God's plan of salvation, and should deal honestly and frankly with men and women. Perhaps they have "belonged" where they were taught and where they believed in the immortality of the soul going to heaven at death, eternal torment, kingdom in the heart, church or heaven, neither understanding nor believing THE GOSPEL; and in this condition they wish to be "received" and recognized as belonging to the "one body." And right here is a great temptation and source of danger. Seeing "others" who swell their numbers with many "accessions," and possibly being animated by the desire to present a pleasing report at Conference, the bars are let down, and in this way an element is liable to get into the Church which is not only not a benefit, but a positive detriment to the cause of truth. Either we must firmly yet lovingly maintain our position, or lay down our warfare and call anything that is taught "gospel," and thus finally indorse the teaching of what we have claimed is error. This is the alternative. The only safe way is to adhere closely to the teaching of the Book, to set forth the plan of salvation before men and women in a way that they can not misunderstand our meaning, not omitting to show them the conditions upon which God has agreed to give eternal life. Then if they will fall in with God's arrangement, if we convert the sinner from the error of his way, we have saved a soul from death. Jas. 5:20. If, on the other hand, they prefer to go with the "crowd," where the way is not so "narrow," we have done our part honestly in the sight of God, and the responsibility will not rest with us, but will revert to those who of their own choice reject the gospel and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.

CHAPTER XV.

A HOLY LIFE AS ESSENTIAL FOR FINAL SALVATION

The Church of God teaches that "a holy life" is "essential for final salvation." Our final salvation is not a matter of present enjoyment, but of hope, and depends upon a manner of life or conduct which is "holy." That this position is well taken, is clear from a number of Scriptures, of which we will give the following examples. "We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Rom. 8:24, 25. Here we have the following points: 1. We are saved. 2. This salvation is "by hope." We both desire and expect it, because it is a matter of promise, and is provided for. 3. We do not yet "see" it; it is not a present possession. 4. Hence "we with patience wait for it." Elsewhere (Rom. 13:17) the brethren were told that "now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." That salvation approached or came "near" when they believed; but now, later on, after some years of experience, it was nearer than at first. Yet, though "nearer," it had even then not fully arrived. They (Paul included, "we.") were still preparing and "waiting for it. He wrote to the Philippian "saints," to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling." Phil.1:1; 2:12. These persons had, as the Romans, accepted the "call" to be "saints" (Rom.1:7), yet it was necessary for even these "saints" to "work out their own salvation," and this work was to be accompanied by "fear and trembling." All of which would be entirely useless and uncalled for if persons obtain "final salvation" as soon as they become "saints" by incipient obedience to the gospel.

This renders ineffective the contention put forth by some very zealous people that they can be and are so completely saved in this life that it is impossible for them to be saved any more at any time. This misapprehension is due to a failure to take into account all the evidence bearing upon the question of salvation. The Bible not only tells us what this salvation is or will be, but also what we are to be saved from, as well as when this salvation is to be enjoyed. It is certainly true that this salvation must be begun in the present life, the preparatory steps must be taken, the conditions must be understood and complied with; but if at any time the "saint" relinquishes, if he neglects so great salvation (which certainly is possible, or such neglect would not be warned against. Heb. 2:3), his "final salvation" goes by default. This shows how "essential" a "holy life" is to salvation.

At what period of time will this salvation be accomplished? The apostle Peter wrote to the "scattered strangers," that having been begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inherit-

ance reserved in heaven for them, they were being "kept by the power of God through faith unto (eis, toward) salvation," and this salvation is "ready to be revealed in the last time." Pet. 1:3-5. This last time can be no other event than the appearing of Jesus Christ which believers are so constantly admonished to look for. However, we are not limited to such inferences, though well founded, but have the apostolic statement that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and to those who look for him will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. Thus, then, 1. Christ was offered once for the sins of many at His first appearing. 2. He will appear a second time. 3. This time without a sin offering. 4. Unto salvation to those who look for him. These are living "a holy life." Yet there is another question demanding consideration: What is the salvation which is "ready to be revealed in the last time," and which Christ will bring to those who look for Him? It was announced to Mary that she should call her Son Jesus, "for he will save his people from their sins." Matth. 1:21. But why save them from their sins? What undesirable quality attaches to "sin" from which "salvation" should be desired? We can not escape the fact that certain consequences attach to sin. "The wages of sin is DEATH." Rom. 6:23. Jesus came to save men from their sins that they might be saved from death. This salvation from sin pertains to the present life. The "holy life," so "essential for final salvation," must be lived now. Then, when Jesus comes the second time, He will save from the power of death and the darkness and gloom of the grave His sleeping ones, who have fallen "asleep in Christ" (1. Cor. 15:18), "the dead in Christ" (1. Thess. 4:16), clothing them with incorruption (1. Cor. 15: 53, 54), changing the living from mortality to immortality (1. Cor. 15:52; 1. Thess. 4:17), and thus mortality will be "swallowed up of life." 2. Cor. 5:4. This salvation, when once accomplished, will be so effectual, so "final," that those so saved, will, like Jesus, be no more subject to death or corruption (Rom. 6:9; Acts 13:34), and will be like the "glorious body" of "the Savior Jesus Christ," for whom they have been "looking" with anxious desire. Phil. 3:20, 21; 1. Thess. 1:9, 10. Everlasting life, exemption from death and all its attendant evils, an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the unbroken companionship of the Savior as the ages roll—this is the "final salvation" for which a holy life is essential.

"A holy life." Holy means "separate, set apart." That from which "saints," holy ones, are separated is sin. He to whom they are "set apart" is God. Sin is unholy, and as long as it adheres to persons, they are separated from God (Isa. 59:2), and can not please Him, for He is holy. That a holy life is possible with the ample provisions God has made must appear to all. Yet we do not wish to be understood as pleading for the kind of "holiness" which is responsible for the saying once heard in a religious meeting, "For six years I have had no need of saying, Forgive us our trespasses, for I have committed no sin to be forgiven." When we wish to know what a

holy life is, we must look to Jesus, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Heb. 7:26. He not only suffered for us, but also left us an example that we should follow in his steps. 1. Pet. 2:21. Those sufferings "for the kingdom of God" (2. Thess. 1:5), previously referred to, have a purpose. We are not naturally "fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62), but must be fitted for it by a course of training which requires the closest attention to the lessons to be inculcated in the school of suffering. Saints, holy ones, are not made on short notice or in a few minutes. True saints are made in the crucible of suffering, where their faith is tried and their patience put to the test; and only when they come to be approved, shall they receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Jas. 1:12. Having endured the trial, and being thus approved, they shall be found "unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1. Pet. 1:7.

God has not only commanded us to be holy, but made it possible that we, though sinful and mortal, can be made holy, in that He, "according to his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us to glory and virtue; hath given us exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature if we escape the corruption that is in the world through lust." By His power He drew us. By His power He keeps us through faith, and by His mighty power we shall be transfigured into the likeness of the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

The Church of God properly is God's Church. The term "church" is a translation from the Greek ekklesia, called out, and has no reference to a church building, or a "denomination" such as exist in great numbers at the present time, but consists of men and women who have been called out of the world and called together for the future glory and kingdom of God by the gospel. 1. Thess. 2:12; 2. Thess. 2:14. They have all been called by the same God, by means of the same gospel, and for the same purpose.

Man-made "churches" control their members by a "book of Discipline." Has the Church of God a discipline? It is impossible to unite and hold together a number of men and women for a definite purpose without some rule of conduct or discipline. God's "divine power" has provided "all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." 2. Pet. 1:3. His arrangement is complete and entire, wanting nothing for all practical purposes, and is contained in the Scriptures which have been given by divine inspiration, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for that instruction (paideia, discipline) which is in righteousness. 2. Tim. 3:16. What is the

object of all this? "That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work." v. 17. See also Acts 20:32; 2. Tim. 3:15; Jas. 1:21.

There is but one right way to get into the Church of God, and that is by belief of the gospel (Mark 16:16) and hearty obedience to its precepts, which includes baptism into the one body. 1. Cor. 12:12, 13. Any person who has from the heart obeyed the gospel (Rom. 6:17), thus being baptized into the Anointed (Rom. 6:1-4; Gal. 3:27), is a member of the Church of God, and can not cease to be such except by an immoral act by which he excludes himself from the body. The Church of God can not give him a letter of "recommendation" to those who neither believe nor appreciate the gospel. Loving belief of the gospel forms the uniting bond between the members of the "one body."

The Head of the Church is Christ. 1. Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:23; Col. 1:18, 24. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3), and in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. v. 9. Whatever "heads" other "bodies" have (who have died long ago), the Church of God must have Christ for its Head, and this Head is alive forever more." Rev. 1:18.

In the local congregations of the Church of God there are elders to whom the "care" and "oversight" of the members has been entrusted. Acts 20:28; 1. Tim. 3:5; 1. Pet. 5:2, 3. These elders are also called "bishops" (Titus 1:5-7), this word being from the Greek episkopos, meaning overseer. "Every church" or congregation must have such elders to attend to the spiritual needs of its members. Acts 14:23. These elders or bishops are neither "presiding elders" nor "bishops" in the sense in which men occupy positions of these names in the "churches" of today. Neither are they "clergymen" as that term is used to designate modern ecclesiastical dignitaries, as all such distinctions are merely man-made, for which there is not the least warrant in the word of God. Into the same category belongs the title "Reverend" with which at present men's names are bedecked. There is One of whom it is said, "Holy and reverend is his name." Ps. 111:9. As disciples and followers of Christ we are not to be called "Rabbi." Matth. 23:7-10. If the character and work of the brethren in the Church of God is such as to commend them to the love and esteem of the rest, they need no such man-made ornamentation to give them dignity; if not, then no amount of needless titles can supply the want.

The deacons are not an "order of the clergy," but ministers or servants of the Church who attend to the financial and temporal affairs of the congregations of which they are members. Acts 6:1-6; Phil. 1:1; 1. Tim. 3:8-12.

According to apostolic precept and example the brethren and sisters of the churches scattered abroad, whether few or many, meet on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7), in remembrance of their absent Lord (1. Cor. 11:23-29), as well as for prayer,

reading of the Scriptures, and exhortation. We are specially exhorted to "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10:25. Where such gatherings are faithfully and regularly held, the brethren and sisters are not only reminded of their obligations, but there is sure to be the desirable "communion of the body." 1. Cor. 10:16. Where such observance is wanting it is often followed by a neglect of other duties, and finally indifference and worldliness are the result. "Until he come." Thus let the interval between the Lord's ascent and his return be characterized by a lively sense of what he has both done and promised to do, and we shall be the better for it.

The relation of the members of the Church of God toward each other is a most intimate one. Like the members of the human body, "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1. Cor. 12:26, 27.

Disputes between members, "if any man have a quarrel against any" (Col. 3:13), are to be settled in the spirit of the Savior's injunction: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Math. 18:15-17. Let there be a forgiving spirit in the body of Christ, "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. 4:32.

Let it be borne in mind that the Church of the living God was intended to be "the pillar and ground of the truth." 1. Tim. 3:15. To bring about the desired result, the Church must both teach and live the truth.

"Now unto him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of the faith, to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

☞ THE END. ☞

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