

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

Published by Committee

—OF THE—

Church of the Firstborn,

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— This Tract is to present a few points in the Articles of Faith as advocated by the Church of the Firstborn, and also to present in a plain form some important principles, that all inquirers after truth may be properly informed concerning the doctrines of the Church.

SAN FRANCISCO:
1887.

Articles of Faith.

ARTICLE I.

OF GOD THE ETERNAL FATHER.

WE BELIEVE that God the Eternal Father is a God infinite in perfection and glory; that He has a glorified body, (Gen. 1: 26; Exod. 33: 22, 23) and dwells in a celestial world, surrounded by His holy angels, whose duties are to administer to mortal beings through the authority of their elder brother, Jesus Christ; that the angels are governed by a celestial law, and that by this they obtain a fulness of perfection.

We believe that God the Eternal Father is the last God that was glorified in the order of the eternal progression of worlds, and that He rules Adam's earth by laws adapted to mortal beings; but that His world is governed by celestial laws, and that mortal beings must not worship any God, but the Eternal Father.

ARTICLE II.

OF THE SAVIOR.

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is the Son of God both in spirit and celestial body; that He came to this mortal earth and appeared in a body that was

especially adapted to the mission He had to perform, viz., as a sacrifice for Adam's children—the chosen ones. John 15: 19. That He was crucified by His enemies, and laid in the tomb by His followers, arose again on the third day, and that by the power of God the angel rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, (Matt. 28: 2) and that thereby He became the first-fruit of the resurrection appertaining to this earth; that He ascended to heaven; (Acts 1: 9) and that He will yet come as the Redeemer of all those whose names are found written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Rev. 20: 12.

We believe that to redeem is to restore that which was lost. Jesus said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. 15: 24. Referring to the house of Israel, we do not mean Israel after the flesh, but Israel after the spirit—those who were loyal in their first estate.

ARTICLE III.
OF FAITH.

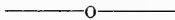
WE BELIEVE that faith being the first principle in revealed religion, it should be a living, abiding faith that moves to action—the same that the ancients possessed—not dead, but alive—both temporal and spiritual. See Spirit Prevails, pages 280 and 342; Hebrews 11.

It is necessary to have faith in the theory of the gospel, for the theory leads the mind heavenward and aids us to constantly seek the mercy of the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ.

By a continual application of faith we are enabled to believe in the promises almost as though we had attained them.

Where faith is there will the knowledge of God be also, with all things that appertain thereto,—revelations, visions and dreams, as well as every other necessary blessing, that the possessor of faith may be perfected.

He that has faith can obtain all necessary blessings, knowledge and wisdom, and he shall know God in all His attributes.



ARTICLE IV.

OF REPENTANCE.

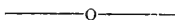


WE BELIEVE in repentance—a repentance that actuates its possessor to cease to do evil and strive to do well; to turn from the evil way and look to God for support.

It is acknowledged that we are, by nature, prone to do wrong and disobey the commandments of God. The evil influence that has surrounded humanity since the days of Adam until the present time, has caused the children of God to commit various sins; but God has provided a plan by

which sins could be remitted through His Son, Jesus Christ. Disobedient persons cannot obtain these blessings, for they will not repent. A true repentance brings conversion; it is a change of motive with good desires. Acts 3: 19.

There is a moral repentance when we become aware of having broken some natural law, or a law of the land; but the Lord requires a change in the inner man—the spirit that dwells in the body; and when the spiritual and the natural man unite, the angels can do their part; then the person that is truly repentant will perform all the required duties, and yield obedience to all the ordinances that Christ instituted.



ARTICLE V.

OF BAPTISM.



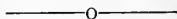
WE BELIEVE that the ordinance of baptism (not sprinkling) is essential to salvation. It is not the water that has any saving power, but it is the obedience manifested that the Lord recognizes and accepts. In the case of the blind man spoken of in the 9th chapter of John, it was not the water that cured him, but it was obedience to the Savior's word. It was the same in the case of Naaman, the Assyrian captain; it was not the water of Jordan, but obedience to the command of Elisha,

that caused his flesh to come upon him as a little child's. II Kings 5: 8-17.

We believe in a submersion in the water—a burial; it is the only scriptural way of remitting sins for those entering the Church; for they must come in through the door; but when they are in the Church they are children, and then they can cry Abba, Father, for they have an Advocate with the Father, and their sins can be remitted without baptism.

This ordinance should be administered by those ministers who are called of God as was Aaron. Hebrews 5: 4; Exod. 28: 1.

Every agent of God must submit to this ordinance to be accepted, for he should be an example as Jesus was when He was baptized by John in the Jordan.



ARTICLE VI.

OF CONFIRMATION.



WHENEVER the gospel is upon the earth, under legitimate direction, the high priests are commanded to officiate in the ordinance of confirmation—it is in the line of their calling.

This ordinance follows baptism, and confers the gift of the Holy Ghost. The priest officiating is the medium, but God alone can sanction. The agents that are appointed by the Lord must be

similar to such men as Peter, James, John and Paul. Acts 8: 15-21; 6: 6; 19: 6; Hebrews 6: 2.

The Holy Ghosts, spoken of in the Scriptures, are the angels of God who are sent to attend those who have been confirmed by ministers that have been legally appointed and set apart to administer in this ordinance; and when these agents are acting in their appointed calling, having been ordained according to their birthright, the Holy Ghosts recognize their work. See Spirit Prevails, page 617, and also the following extract:

“What are Holy Ghosts? They are men who have once lived upon a mortal earth like unto this. Upon what principle did they, being many, become one? Upon the same principle as that by which the Father and the Son became one. They all obeyed one gospel, were all perfected by the same law, were all counted worthy of a glorious resurrection; they all entered into the celestial kingdom of their Father, through whom and by whom they were all ordained to the high and holy priesthood, and by Him they were appointed to fill the office of Holy Ghosts, and to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation upon this earth.”

ARTICLE VII.

OF PROGRESSION.

WE BELIEVE in the principle of progression, or, as it is generally called, evolution. It is an eternal

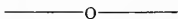
principle put into action by the power of God and His angels, who are the sustainers of His word.

By the law of progression man and woman first came forth in the spirit world—born in spirit in pairs. Matt. 19: 4; Gen. 1: 27; 5: 2.

Our spiritual birth shows a pre-existence before this life. Jude, verse 6.

Jesus said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." John 6: 38. If our blessed Savior had a spiritual pre-existence, it must certainly be a true principle. He spoke of the spirit part, the inner man, but not that part which He received from His mother. His body was nailed to the cross to redeem spirits from their lost condition—not to remit sins committed by corruptible flesh. Corinthians 15: 22–45; Spirit Prevails, page 219.

Adam's children are here on probation to work out for themselves a redemption and an exaltation, which they will obtain through Jesus Christ, as their Savior, and He will finally redeem them from the yoke of bondage. Spirit Prevails, page 513, par. 6.



ARTICLE VIII.

OF REINCARNATION; OR, REIM- BODIMENT.

WE BELIEVE that previous to the days of Jesus the principle of reincarnation was fully believed in

by the prophets, for if they are correct, David must come again. Jeremiah 33: 15, to the end of chapter. And we believe that many others of the same order as David will appear again in mortality; for Jesus told His disciples that if He (Jesus) went away He would come again. John 14: 3. If Jesus comes again to this mortal earth to receive His disciples, it must be when they come again in another mortal body, for, according to the promises, they will be judges over Israel. Matt. 19: 28.

Jesus asked the question, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" You can see the answer of the apostles in Matt. 16: 14.

We believe that it is impossible for any person to obtain sufficient knowledge in one probation to prepare them to live with the angels of heaven. See Spirit Prevails, page 201, par. 3.

Nature runs her rounds of eternal beauty every year; she dies in the winter and comes to life in the spring, and shows forth that life-giving power from the Father.

This reappearance of persons who have had several existences upon earth is accomplished by the ordinary method of human generation, for the mortal is only phenomenal or apparent: it is spirit alone that is eternal and unchangeable. Spirit Prevails, page 665.

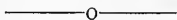
Job said that he would see God for himself in the latter day. He did not say in the morning of the new creation, or the first resurrection. Job 19: 23-27.

Such a resurrection as the Christian world is expecting will never take place, for our bodies are under the dominion of death, and will be held on the field of death, and we cannot receive them again. Job 7: 9; 14: 12.

God said, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord." Malachi 4: 5; 6. This prophecy has been fulfilled. Spirit Prevails, page 665.

When we die the spirit goes to the spirit world, and the body to mother earth, and in time we are sent on another mission to obtain more experience. We come again as little babes, and, as Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," so it will be with us, we will be born again before we see the kingdom of God established upon the earth. We receive a body adapted to every mission we have to perform. See Jeremiah 1: 5.

With this principle many of the apparent mysteries of the Bible can be explained.



ARTICLE IX.

OF REVELATION.

WE BELIEVE that the revelation of God's will is as necessary at the present time as it has been at any period of the world's history, and that the Lord will raise up men like unto Moses, who will lead the spiritual Israel as Moses did the temporal.

The Lord's power for revealing to good men is still in existence, and the way is open for the mind and will of God to be revealed if we have the faith to believe and receive it.

Inasmuch as the commercial world communicates by the telegraph and telephone, we think that God has means equally efficient, and more powerful, to communicate with men upon this earth, in the present dispensation, for the instruction of His people in all those spiritual matters that are necessary for their refinement for eternity.

We believe that those agents who bring to light the various inventions are of the royal seed of heaven, and that they come to this mortal earth, having been delegated by the Government of Heaven for the purpose of making known the new inventions for the benefit of their fellow men.

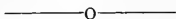
The revealing power, in either scientific or spiritual matters, belongs to such agents as appeared to John the Revelator on the Isle of Patmos. Rev. 22: 8, 9; Spirit Prevails, page 227.

The fulness of the gospel embraces all the truths that have been given by revelation from the days of Adam down to the present time.

When Jesus was upon the earth He was the medium through which the Father communicated His will to man; hence, when Jesus asked, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" Peter answered, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not re-

vealed it unto thee. * * * Upon this rock [revelation and confession] I will build my church." Some say it is upon Peter. Some say it is upon Christ. Others say it is upon revelation. We believe that it is upon the revealed will of the Father to the president of the Church, and the confession, or acknowledgment, by the members that God does reveal His will to His appointed agents.

We believe that many persons do have divine impressions for their own benefit and encouragement; but that for the direction of the Church there must be direct revelation upon all important doctrine, etc., through the person who has been ordained and commissioned by the Government of Heaven. We refer the reader to the calling of Paul. Acts 9: 15. And we believe with Paul in being obedient to the law of God, as it is holy. Rom. 7: 12; Spirit Prevails, rev. 106, par. 2, and rev. 205, par. 1.

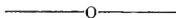


ARTICLE X.

OF THE MILLENNIUM; OR, THE REIGN OF PEACE.

WE BELIEVE that there will be one thousand years of peace for those who pass through the first resurrection, and that during this time Christ will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, (Rev. 19: 16) and that this period as well as being a

grand rest for the saints will be a time set apart for justice, when the twelve apostles shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging and defending the twelve tribes of Israel from the accuser of the brethren. Matt. 19: 28: Spirit Prevails, page 455, par. 2, also page 606; Isaiah 52: 7; Nahum 1: 15; Psalm 47. That each president of a thousand years, or the seven angels, will open the books spoken of by John the Revelator. These books contain an account of the actions of those of Adam's children who stood loyal in their first estate, and the judges examine the books to ascertain what accusations and charges have been made by the fallen ones against the loyal children of Adam, and those whose good deeds are found to overbalance their evil deeds are allowed to enter into the rest of peace. What a joy it will be for the weary souls that have been oppressed under the reign of the devil for six thousand years to live and reign upon this earth while the devil is deprived of his power. Malachi 4: 2, 3.



ARTICLE XI.

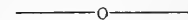
OF THE RESURRECTION.

“THE RESURRECTION of the dead is a birth—a spiritual birth, wherein children are born of immortal parents in a similar manner as, in their second estate, they are born of mortal ones.” See Spirit Prevails, page 654, par. 1.

We believe that the one hundred and forty-four thousand that John saw will come with Jesus upon Mount Zion, as fathers, to commence the resurrection of those persons who are to live and reign with Christ during the Millennium. Rev. 14: 1; Spirit Prevails, page 416, on the first resurrection, and page 654 on the final or celestial resurrection, also see I Corinthians 15: 37, 38.

The children in the first resurrection will have bodies similar to that which Jesus had when He was upon the earth—born of a mortal mother, but begotten by a celestial father. Jesus was the first-fruit of this mode of resurrection upon this earth; and to live with Him, and be like Him, we must have bodies of a similar nature: this will constitute the first resurrection. Rev. 20: 6.

At the expiration of the thousand years of peace, those who had part in the first resurrection will be entitled to a celestial resurrection; then this earth will be in the celestial sphere, and its inhabitants can say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" See Spirit Prevails, page 12, par. 11.



ARTICLE XII.

OF REWARDS and PUNISHMENT.

WE BELIEVE in rewards and punishment; but we do not believe in an endless hell. Those of Adam's children who were loyal in their first or spiritual estate are heirs to salvation, but they are sent into this mortal world to prepare for redemption and exaltation. There is a possibility that some of them may not progress and procure an exaltation;

for Paul says, "One star differeth from another star in glory." I Corinthians 15: 41.

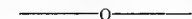
An heirship to anything does not imply possession. We obtain the blessing of eternal life by living for it in obedience to the law of God and to the spiritual truths given through the ministers of God. But if we live after the flesh, and attend to the things of this life only, we sow to the flesh, and we shall reap the same. Galatians 6: 7, 8. We are free to choose our course, and we shall be judged by the word given and the light and knowledge we have had an opportunity of acquiring. All riches, either temporal or spiritual, are obtained by labor.

Men who have given themselves to the pursuits of this life use all their energy in the acquirement of riches; they do not contemplate upon the riches of eternity; but it will be with them as it was with the young man that came to Jesus and wanted to know what he should do to obtain eternal life. Jesus said to him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and come and follow me." Matt. 19: 21.

We believe that some people suffer for their transgressions in this life. Death is the penalty for sins of the flesh; but the sins of the spirit are accounted for in the spirit land. After we have cast off this mortal, the deeds done in the body come to memory, and if our deeds have been evil, we at once feel convicted, and fully realizing our condition, we are anxious to come in mortality to try again. Spirit Prevails, page 506, par. I.

Some people think that because we teach that those who were loyal in their first estate are saved, that it is of very little importance how mortals act. This idea is incorrect, for they must obtain a full salvation by their works. There is a possibility of heirs to salvation falling in their second or mortal estate. Spirit Prevails, page 653, par. 9. "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. 3: 11.

Those who receive a resurrection will be happy; but there will be various offices to fill, and those who have prepared themselves will receive an appointment among the redeemed and exalted. See Spirit Prevails, pages 166 to 172.



ARTICLE XIII.

CHURCH RULE.

PEOPLE often ask, "What is the Church rule relative to temporal matters?" We believe that under church discipline the law of tithing is for the body of the Church, excepting those who can give all to the Lord; these persons are nearer the kingdom, for the law of consecration belongs to the kingdom. Spirit Prevails, page 354, par. 5.

The law of consecration is especially for officers. All that have faith to consecrate will be blessed accordingly, as "Leave all, and follow me," are the words of the great Captain.

Those who believe in the principles and doctrines of the Church, and feel that they cannot pay tithing, or consecrate, can make a free will offering; therefore, the greater part of the people will be under the law of tithing.