

ORDER
OF
THE CHURCH OF GOD.

J. B. FRISBIE.

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let all things be done decently, and in ORDER. 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 40.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in ORDER the things that are wanting. Titus i, 5.

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BY J. B. FRISBIE.

“FOR if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of *the church of God?*” 1 Tim. iii, 5.

I. *The Name*—THE CHURCH OF GOD.

Acts xx, 28. Feed the church of God. 1 Cor. i, 2. The church of God which is at Corinth. 1 Cor. x, 32; xi, 22; xv, 9; 2 Cor. i, 1; Gal. i, 13. I persecuted the church of God. 1 Thess. ii, 14. The churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus. Rev. i, 4. The seven churches which are in Asia. This is the name that God has seen fit to give to his church, because it belongs to him.

II. *The Church of God*—ONE BODY.

Rom. xii, 4, 5. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ. 1 Cor. x, 17; xii, 12, 27. For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the

members of that one body, being many, are one body ; so also is Christ. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular, Eph. iv, 4-6. There is one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

We trace the foundation and origin of God's church back to the garden of Eden. When the promise was made of Christ, [Gen. iii, 15,] then was the foundation of the true church laid, and the children of God from that time to this have been members of his church.

When God brought his people out of Egypt, it is said that Christ was in *the church* in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us. Acts vii, 38. This was that spiritual Rock that followed them : and that Rock was Christ. 1 Cor. x, 4. This Rock must have been the same foundation upon which the church was built from the garden of Eden when the promise was made. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. iii, 11. The same Rock foundation is brought to view after Peter acknowledged Christ to be the Son of the living God. Jesus told him, Upon this Rock (i. e., himself) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. xvi, 15-18 ; Isa. xxviii, 16. Behold, I lay in Zion for a *foundation* a stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure *foundation*. Acts, iv, 11, 12 ; Eph. ii, 20 ; 1 Pet. ii, 4-8 ; 2 Tim. ii, 19. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure.

We know that Rome claims that their church was built on St. Peter. Now if we allow their claim, does it not make their church a man-made church founded upon the man Peter? And then what are all the churches that have come out of her but man-made churches, daughters of the mother? We can trace them back to their founders who came out of the Roman church.

The Baptist, Anabaptist or Mennonites, who owe most of their origin from Menno Simonis, who had formerly been a popish priest about A. D. 1436. Martin Luther came out of the church of Rome, who was the founder of the church called Lutherans, A. D. 1517. John Calvin was the founder of the Calvinistic sects, as Presbyterians, Congregationalists, &c., A. D. 1519-1588. Calvin also came out of the Roman church. King Henry VIII, king of England, renounced the supremacy of the pontiff, soon after he was declared by the parliament and people supreme head of the church of England, about A. D. 1530. The Methodists arose in England A. D. 1729, under John Wesley, who lived and died in the church of England. Should not these churches be called after the names of the fathers who founded them, because they belong to them? We as a people desire to have the faith of Abraham, and belong to the same church that he did, [Gal. iii, 7, 29,] and to be grafted into the tame olive tree by faith, which has Christ for its holy Root, [Rom. xi, 16-24,] and to the same church in which Christ was born and has been persecuted by the dragon. Rev. xii, 1-5.

III. CHRIST THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

Eph. i, 22, 23. God gave Christ to be head over all things to the church, which is his body. Eph. iv, 15 ; v, 23. Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body. Col. i, 18. He is the head of the body, the church.

Christ is called the great and chief Shepherd of his sheep and flock. John x, 11, 14 ; Heb. xiii, 20 ; 1 Pet. v, 4. And *Bishop* of your souls. 1 Pet. ii, 25.

IV. THE LORD ADDED TO HIS CHURCH.

Acts ii, 47. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts v, 14 ; xi, 24. And much people was added unto the Lord. 1 Cor. xii, 28. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Eph. iv, 12, 13. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come in the *unity* of the faith. This state of things must be brought about in his church before Christ comes.

Who does the Lord add to his church ? Rom. iii, 25. Those who exercise *faith* in Christ's blood . . . for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. Acts ii, 38. Those who repent and are baptized . . . for the remission of sins. Rom. vi, 2, 4, 17, 18. Those who are dead to sin and are buried with Christ in baptism, and have *obeyed* from the *heart* that *form* of doctrine which was delivered unto them. Be-

ing then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 1 Cor. xii, 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. Gal. iii, 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 1 Pet. i, 22. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. 2 Pet. i, 4-12. When any one presents themselves for baptism, it may be proper to ask, "Can any forbid water?" &c. Acts x, 47.

V. NAMES ARE RECORDED IN HEAVEN.

That there are literal records in heaven, the following may show. Luke x, 20. Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Phil. iv, 3. Whose names are in the book of life. Heb. xii, 23. And church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. Rev. xxi, 27. They which are written in the Lamb's book of life. Dan. vii, 10; xii, 1; Mal. iiii, 16; Ex. xxxii, 32, 33; Ps. lvi, 8; lxix, 28; cxxxix, 16; Rev. iii, 5; Rev. xiii, 8; xvii, 8; xx, 12.

VI. BROTHERLY LOVE—THE BOND OF UNION AND FELLOWSHIP.

A converted mind, by the Spirit of God, is the the only thing that will produce brotherly love and love to God. Rom. v, 5; viii, 7; 1 John iv, 21. Ps. cxxxiii, 1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for *brethren* to dwell together in *unity*. John xiii, 34, 35. A new commandment I

give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. *By this shall all men know* that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Gal. vi, 2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 1 Thess. iv, 9 ; 1 John iii, 11, 14, 23. For this is the commandment that ye heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. John xvii, 22, 23. That they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. Acts ii, 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and *fellowship*. Acts iv, 32. And *the multitude* of them that believed were of *one heart* and of *one soul*. Rom. xii, 10, 16. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love ; in honor preferring one another. Be of the same mind one toward another. Rom. xv, 5-7. That ye may with *one mind* and *one mouth* glorify God. 1 Cor. i, 10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Cor. xi, 18 ; xii, 25 ; 2 Cor. xiii, 11 ; Eph. v, 21 ; Phil. i, 5, 27. Your fellowship in the gospel. Phil. ii, 1-3. If any fellowship of the Spirit, . . . let each esteem other better than themselves. Phil. iii, 16. Let us walk by the same rule. Phil. iv, 2 ; Heb. xiii, 1 ; 1 Pet. ii, 17 ; iii, 8 ; v, 5 ; 1 John i, 3, 7 ; iv, 7, 20, 21.

VII. CHURCH ORDER AND DISCIPLINE.

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let all things be done *decently* and in *order*. 1 Cor. xiv, 33, 40.

Good order is the main thing for the prosperity, peace and happiness of the church of God.

Good government depends on good laws and good rulers.

A Theocracy should be perfect.

And as far as the laws of God are concerned, it is perfect; for the law of the Lord is perfect. Ps. xix, 7. And as far as God is judge, and executes the penalties of his laws, it will be just. But as far as the work is entrusted to mortals, it may be imperfect. But if we all do the best we can, it will be all that is required of us.

The government of the church at first appears to have been patriarchal, as must have been the case in the days of Noah, Abraham, &c.

But we will come down directly to Moses, when God led his church through the wilderness until Christ. Ex. xviii, 13-26; Num. xi, 16, 17; Deut. i, 9-18; xvi, 18-20; xvii, 2-13; xix, 15-21; Heb. ii, 2; x, 28. The wisest among them were chosen for judges and rulers. And the matter that was too hard they brought to Moses, or the priest or ruler who judged at the time.

We will now turn to the order of the new Testament which is similar to that of the Old. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? 1 Cor. vi, 5, 8-10. Brother should

never go to law with brother. It is commendable for the churches to settle their own trials if possible, without bringing them to the elders who labor in word and doctrine. In all cases of personal offences Matt. xviii, 15-17 should be followed to the letter. "Moreover 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 unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man." It is all important that these rules be strictly adhered to. It will save much trouble. We should never admit witnesses outside of the church, for Christ has provided the way to get them in the church by taking the one or two, &c. Here is wisdom. Luke xvii, 3, 4. Forgive a brother seven times a day if he will say, I repent. 1 Cor. v, 1-5, 9-13; 2 Cor. xii, 14-21; xiii, 1, 2. Paul passed his judgment upon this case of incest, and gave direction to the church that when they were gathered together to put away from among themselves that wicked person. 1 Cor. x, 20; 2 Cor. vi, 14; Gal. v, 19-21; Eph. v, 2-5, 11. *Have no fellowship* with the unfruitful works of darkness. Col. iii, 5, 6; 2 Thess. iii, 6, 11, 14, 15. *Withdraw* yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly. 1 Tim. vi, 3-5; 2 Tim. iii, 1-5; Titus iii, 10, 11; Rom. i, 29, 31; xvi, 17; Rev. xxii, 15. Any sin that will shut out of the kingdom of heaven should not be fellowshipped in

the church. We have referred to a large list of them. We do not add to the church and record names on earthly church-books, neither do we turn out or blot out. But we fellowship and dis-fellowship those who give evidence that God has received or rejected. For by their fruits ye shall know them. Matt. xii, 33-36. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Jas. iii, 2. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. How important it is that we watch our words and thoughts. Phil. iv, 8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think* on these things.

VIII. CHURCH ORDER IN THE MINISTRY.

Heb. v, 4. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Aaron was a type of Christ. 1 Pet. ii, 4. Jesus was chosen of God. Luke vi, 13. Jesus *chose* twelve, whom also he named apostles. Mark iii, 14. He *ordained* twelve. Mark vi, 7. He called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two. John xv, 16. Ye have not *chosen* me, but I have *chosen* you, and *ordained* you. Luke x, 1. After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

A vacancy filled. Acts i, 22, 26. There were about an hundred and twenty together. They appointed two and prayed and cast lots to know whom the Lord had chosen, that they might ordain him. And the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven.

Paul was called of God. Acts ix, 15. The Lord said, He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles, &c. 1 Cor. i, 1. Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. 2 Tim. i, 11. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 1 Tim. ii, 7. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, &c.

Gospel ministry was to be continued to the end of the world. 2 Tim. ii, 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, *the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* Matt. xxviii, 19, 20. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. xiii, 39; 1 Cor. xi, 26. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he come.* John xxi, 21, 22. Till I come . . . should not die.

It must have been the design of God that ministers should be called and sent to preach the word till the end of the world. The disciples learned of Jesus, [Acts iv, 13,] and Paul was taught by direct revelation from God. Gal. i, 11, 12, 17; 2 Cor. xii, 1. And as they have written

what they were taught of God, we are required to read and study their inspired writings. John v, 39. Search the Scriptures. 1 Tim. iv, 13. Give attendance to *reading*. 2 Tim. ii, 15. *Study* to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The *theory* of the truth in the head is not all that qualifies a man for a gospel minister; *but character is very necessary*.

Isa. lii, 11. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. 2 Tim. ii, 21-26; 1 Tim. iii, 2-7. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice, (one newly come to the faith, margin, Heb. v, 12, 13, for he is a babe,) lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the Devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the Devil. Titus i, 5-9.

By the theoretical and practical qualifications here laid down by the apostle to the Gentiles, the church and elders can know who are called of God to preach his word.

The order of electing and ordaining elders and deacons. Acts vi, 2-6. The twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said,

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost

and wisdom, whom *we may appoint*, &c. And the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Stephen, &c., whom they set before the apostles ; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. Acts xiii, 1-4 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers ; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy-Ghost, departed. Acts xiv, 23. And when they had *ordained* (Greek, *cheirotoneo*. By lifting up hands as the word imports) them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting. Acts xx, 17, 28. Paul called the elders of the church, and said, Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*, (Greek, *episkopos*, Bishop,) to feed the church of God. 2 Cor. viii, 19, 23. Who was also *chosen* (Greek, *cheirotoneo*, to vote or choose by holding up the hand) of the churches to travel with us with this grace or gift. Titus, i, 5, 7. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are *wanting*, and *ordain* (Greek, *kathistemi*, to appoint) elders in every city, as I have appointed thee. For a bishop must be blameless. Elder and bishop the same. 1 Tim. iv, 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee

by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the *presbytery*. Greek, *presbuterion*. Elders or chief persons in the Christian church. 2 Tim. i, 6. Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. It appears that the power of the Holy Spirit of God was imparted by the laying on of hands. And also it was a separating act in ordaining elders and deacons.

The duties of elders. 2 Tim. iv, 2. Preach the word. Eph. i, 13. The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Rom. i, 16. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Eph. vi, 17. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Heb. iv, 12. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.

1 Thess. i, 5. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. 1 Cor. ii, 4, 5; Rom. xv, 19; 1 Pet. i, 12.

Matt. xxiv, 45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season. 1 Pet. v, 2, 3. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples of the flock.

To administer the ordinances. Matt. xxviii, 19. Teach all nations, baptizing them. Acts viii, 12, 38. They were baptized, both men and women. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

John xiii, 1-17. Christ instituted feet-wash-

ing and the Lord's supper. 1 Cor. xi, 23-34. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.

Duty of the church to their ministers. 1 Cor. ix, 7-14. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? 2 Cor. viii, 13-15; ix, 7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 1 Thess. v, 12, 13. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. And to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake. 1 Tim. v, 17, 18. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the laborer is worthy of his reward. Heb. xiii, 7, 17. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God. For they watch for your souls as they that must give account.

1 Thess. v, 25. Brethren, pray for us. Col. iv, 3; Eph. vi, 19. The church should pray for the success of their ministers.

The duty of a deacon. This is an officer who sees to the temporal wants of the church; and as an elder is to serve and minister in spiritual things, so the deacon is to serve and minister in temporal things. His office is of equal importance in the church of God with that of an elder. Acts vi, 1-6.

Here they were ordained to attend to the daily ministration of food. For it was not reason that the apostles should leave the word of God and serve tables. 1 Tim. iii, 8-13. Their qualifications were similar to that of elders. Phil. i, 1. Bishops and deacons are mentioned as two different officers. Any difficulties arising between brethren in their temporal deal, may devolve on the deacons to assist in the settlement. To see to all necessary preparations for the ordinances, &c.

Conferences. Gal. ii. 6. But of those who seemed to be somewhat in *conference* added nothing to me. It appears to have been necessary for the apostles to have conferences to counsel on important matters. As was the case [Acts xv,] this conference for consultation settled the matter and served to unite the church. In this conference the apostles and elders, with the whole church, acted in unison after a full explanation and understanding of the matter.

CONCLUSION.—In preaching the present truth it is much the same as when the apostles were first sent out. The Lord told his disciples to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Matt. x, 16. Paul says, Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God. 1 Cor. x, 32. Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. 2 Cor. vi, 3-10.

The parable of the sower shows clearly the different classes of hearers. Matt. xiii, 19-23. Some that receive the word with joy cannot bear persecution, for they have no root in themselves, and so are offended. And such go out from us because they are not of us; for if they had been of us no doubt they would have remained with us. 1 John ii, 19. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. Jude 19. There will be hay, wood and stubble, and lukewarm ones who will fall off. Be not discouraged, for God's people will be gathered.

It could not be expected that we could do much more than to arrange and quote the most important scriptures in a little work of sixteen pages. Therefore we shall expect to be excused if we have not cleared up every point to the full satisfaction of all our brethren. Those who have to break new and almost untrodden paths cannot expect to make the road very plain by traveling it over but once or twice. We leave room for others to better the tract hereafter.

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