

Dr. Alfred Malone (1835-1893)

Alfred Malone was born in Indiana, and he and his wife Hattie had one son. Dr. Malone preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. He had come out of the Disciples, and he said when he preached about the kingdom, they listened. In his hometown of Palestine, however, people were not interested. Malone was a physician who operated a drug store. He said his change of beliefs did not adversely affect his business, but he prayed he could preach more, and that people in Palestine would listen. Malone went south into Clark County, Illinois, for three days in 1860. He preached at the Moriah church that was experiencing conflict. Membership had fallen from 40 to six. He baptized the second wife of John Partlowe, the congregation's preacher for the previous 12 years. Malone told the congregation if they could settle their dispute, he would be back.

Dr. Malone also preached in Indiana at the Old Union and New Liberty Churches of God north of Indianapolis. He reported in August 1868 to Benjamin Wilson in the Gospel Banner that he encouraged members to subscribe to the Banner. He reported having found "not one copy of the Gospel Banner in either church." Some members said, "We are taking the Herald" (Thomas Wilson's Herald of the Coming Kingdom and Christian Instructor). Malone believed they should take two papers about One Faith, to have variety in reading matter. Some said, "The Herald and The Banner should be united." Malone replied, "I think not unless they are enlarged and both editors are retained." He definitely supported The Gospel Banner.

In the later years of 1868 and 1869, Dr. Malone's writing on the subject, "Do the Dead Live until the Coming of Christ in His Kingdom?" appeared regularly in The Gospel Banner. This title is not as unusual as it seems, for the series was a discourse on the orthodox teaching of natural immortality versus the doctrine of conditional immortality. The series indicated Malone's roots in the development of early thought (doctrine) of the Church of God in America, especially in the Midwest.

He wrote once asking for grace and moderation in remarks made about people who did not believe in One Faith or Age to Come. Although Benjamin Wilson did not emphasize the doctrine and phrase "Age to Come," people in the field believed it, and Malone's words echoed the sentiments of the readers. Malone thought some comments on the subject were too caustic and might delay new readers from accepting the Gospel of the Kingdom.

In addition to receiving the Spirit through the reading of the Word, Dr. Malone believed in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that enables one to serve the Lord through the gifts of the Spirit. He said in the pages of The Gospel Banner:

We believe in all that the scriptures teach, when rightly applied, and "in the words of the Spirit." We believe in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in prayer in the church, in the family, and in secret. And though we may not be able to show how the Spirit is received and enjoyed by the believer, yet we know that this is the case. We are not commanded to preach the Spirit, but we are commanded to "preach the word"—to preach "Christ and him crucified." The word believed and obeyed will bring the Spirit into the heart, and exhibit him in the life, and lead to God.

He published a book in 1879 titled The Age to Come with a subtitle, Embracing some of The Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, as well as The Future and Eternal Age. This book was published by The Restitution in Plymouth, Indiana, identifying it and its author within the fellowship of the Church of God. Dr. Malone's premise stated that the King James Bible did not accurately render some of the biblical ideas of the Age to Come. In his introductory remarks he noted:

There are some words and phrases in the King James' version [that] seemingly oppose this doctrine, and indeed to the veracity of the Bible itself. For example, King James' version makes Paul say that Jesus died in the end of the world. Yet more than eighteen centuries since that event have been rolled back into the ages past, and still the material world is standing. Either Paul was wrong or the King James' version does not fairly represent the original. Heb. 9:26, "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The word rendered world here is aionoon in the plural, and should be rendered ages—not world or worlds. But it is true that Christ died in the end of the ages—the Jewish ages.

Because of Malone's medical background, his comments regarding scriptural interpretation are full of medical ideas. To illustrate the "sleep of the dead" concept, he noted:

Chloroform or other anaesthetics may be so used that all thought, feeling and action, other than the involuntary action of the heart and arteries, may be arrested as profoundly as in death; so that capital surgical operations may be performed, and the patient not know it, not feel it. If in natural and profound sleep nothing is known; if the cataleptic may know nothing for days, weeks and months; if those under the influence of anaesthetics know not anything, feel not anything; is it strange that God takes away man's breath or spirit, and that man shall know nothing, feel nothing, until God shall have raised him from the dead? Surely not, and as the Bible is full of such teaching, we cannot be a believer unless we believe it.

Dr. Malone's approach when explaining the Age to Come was different than Joseph Marsh's. Since no evidence exists to indicate Malone quoted Marsh, it must be assumed that during the 28 years since Marsh's book was published, copies of it had become scarce. While Marsh explained the Age to Come by comparing the prophecy systems of the Millerites, the Catholics and other denominations to Marsh's interpretation of biblical prophecy, Malone began immediately to do word studies on Greek terms relating to the ages, and then he discussed the theology. The result is a scholarly and powerful work. Whatever his formal education had been, he certainly had been trained in Greek and Hebrew.

Malone also discussed another topic of interest to Church of God pastors: resurrection and the sequence of those being raised. He said under the heading "Eclectic Resurrection":

The chosen dead only are to be then raised. I Thess. 4:16, 17: "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." It is only those in Christ, not sinners that are to come up in "the first resurrection." There cannot be a "first" without a second or

general one. But the second does not take place then, but "a thousand years afterward". I Cor. 15:21-23: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." This epistle was written to Christians only, but does the phrase "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," embrace the whole human family? By no means. Whosoever dies in Adam and who are also in Christ will be made alive in this resurrection, but none others.

These comments clearly prove that Malone was not a universalist. He believed that only those who express belief and commitment to Christ will be raised and rewarded, not all humans on earth.

Malone wrote frequently for the pages of *The Restitution*. In 1883, he authored an article, "One Fair Chance for All?" that discussed aspects of the Age to Come, resurrection and probation of the nations.

The Archives of Atlanta Bible College in McDonough, GA, received a copy of Malone's book from the library of A.R. Underwood, editor and publisher of *The Restitution* at Plymouth, Indiana.

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