

1 Corinthians

and

2 Corinthians

Elder Gilbert Beebe

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These were all published separately and to my knowledge were not ever compiled like they are here. I just thought it might be nice to have them all together like this.

Tom Adams

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Table of Contents

I CORINTHIANS I. 30.....	4
I CORINTHIANS II. 13.....	5
I CORINTHIANS II. 13.....	7
(Concluded.).....	7
I CORINTHIANS 3:10-15.....	11
I CORINTHIANS 3:16,17.....	13
I CORINTHIANS 4:15.....	16
I CORINTHIANS 4:15.....	19
(Concluded.).....	19
I CORINTHIANS 5:4-8.....	23
1 COR. VI. 13; HEB. XLI. 1; 1 JOHN III. 9.....	29
I CORINTHIANS 7:5, 14-16.....	32
I CORINTHIANS VII. 16.....	34
I CORINTHIANS 8:5,6.....	35
I CORINTHIANS VIII. 11.....	39
I CORINTHIANS IX. 14.....	42
I CORINTHIANS 9:27.....	43
I CORINTHIANS X. 13.....	45
I CORINTHIANS 15:5.....	48
I CORINTHIANS 15:24-28.....	48
(Reply to Sister Brown).....	48
II CORINTHIANS II. 15, 16.....	54
II CORINTHIANS III. 7,8.....	56
II CORINTHIANS 5:21.....	59
GODLY SORROW WORKETH REPENTANCE: II CORINTHIANS 7:10.....	62
II CORINTHIANS XII. 2.....	65
II CORINTHIANS 12:2-4.....	66
II CORINTHIANS XIII. 5.....	68

I CORINTHIANS I. 30.

A CORRESPONDENT in Virginia inquires whether the text 1 Cor. i. 30, teaches that the preacher is of God, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, or that Christ is made these things unto us?

From the statement of the question, we infer that some self important preacher has laid claim to the application of these words to those who preach; that as preachers, they are the wisdom of the church. This idea would seem to agree with what Job said ironically to his miserable comforters, “No doubt ye are the men, and wisdom will die with you.” Nothing can, however, be more clear, than that these words are spoken in testimony of what Christ is of God made to his church. “But of him are ye in Christ? Of whom God who hath chosen the weak and despised things, &c., is antecedent to the pronoun *Him*; therefore the plain rendering is, “But of God are ye,” (that is his people, his new creation; for, if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature, old things are passed away, and all things have become new) “in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom,” &c. It is not of ourselves, nor of our works, nor of men, nor of angels, that we are in Christ, for if we are in him, “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God bath before ordained that we should walk in them.” – Eph. ii. 10 Of God were we set up in Christ from everlasting, chosen of God in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world. – Eph. i. 4 “Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” These same scriptures which prove that our existence and security in Christ is absolutely of God, equally demonstrate that our life in Christ is not of our minister, nor of any other being or power than that of God alone. That Christ, and not the preachers, is made unto the members of his mystical body, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, is so abundantly proved by the united testimony of the scriptures, and so very apparent in the experience of all who are born of God, arguments would be quite superfluous.

First, of God, of the provisions of his counsel, of his grace, and experimentally of the quickening operation of his Holy Spirit, Christ is made unto us wisdom. “We preach Christ and him crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” – 1 Cor. i. 22, 23. But why is Christ to the one class so essentially different from what he is unto the other? Why is he a stumbling block and foolishness to carnal Jews and Greeks, and the wisdom of God to all that are called? Because God has chosen him so. God has caused us to differ. God has chosen us unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Secondly, Of God, Christ is made the righteousness of his people; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, “The Lord our Righteousness.” “Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness.” Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, &c.

Thirdly, Of God, is Christ our sanctification; by, through, and of him, the saints are set apart unto salvation, consecrated to God, to holiness and eternal life.

Fourthly, Of God, Christ is our redemption. Certainly our minister did not redeem us from sin, guilt, condemnation, wrath and perdition; they paid no ransom price for us, neither was the right

of redemption in them. Christ the near kinsman, by virtue of pre-existing relationship, held the legal right to redeem his people from the curse and dominion of the law, to redeem unto God by his own blood, and having redeemed us with a price, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,” &c. The New School are welcome to all the wisdom they can find, in their teachers, preachers, or the professors in their universities; for it is foolishness with God; but if the children of God lack wisdom they look for it in Christ, and ask it of him who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. They are welcome to all their own, and all the righteousness they can derive from their preachers; it is too defective, ragged and filthy, for the bride, the Lamb’s wife. We covet not their consecration through the services of their clergy. Christ our Priest having by his own blood ascended into heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. We give not one longing look after that redemption which is supposed to be by such corruptible things as silver and gold, or works, or efforts of men or of angels.

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I CORINTHIANS II. 13.

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

To us it seems important at the present time, that the testimony of the apostles upon the subject embraced in this text, should be kept before the church of God, both for their admonition and consolation. For their admonition, because the temptation to regard worldly wisdom as being in some manner or to some extent connected with the prosperity of the cause of God, is much stronger and more insinuating and seductive than it has been in ages past. If in all ages of the church, and under all circumstances, it has been necessary to observe this solemn admonition of the apostle, now that evil men and seducers have grown worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, it is the more needful that we take heed to those words which we have heard spoken, lest at any time we should let them slip.

It is important also that we refresh the memory of the saints upon this important subject for their consolation, seeing that they are greatly reproached by their adversaries for their lack of the wisdom which the world teaches. Caricatures, slurs, reproaches, ridicule and taunting jeers are dealt out upon our churches and the servants of the churches with an astonishing profusion, and many are made sad, and feel mortified when reproached for their ignorance of the popular

sciences of the world. To call the attention of that poor and afflicted people who are everywhere spoken against to the consolations of the gospel, is calculated to fortify them for the encounter of the enemy. There is a peculiar fitness at the present moment in the application of the text under consideration, to the ministry of the gospel ordained by Christ. Showing, first, what things (by scriptural authority and apostolic example) are to be preached. Second, the manner in which these things were preached by the apostles, and are to be preached by Christ's ministers.

1st. The things to be preached are those which none of the princes of this world know. The princes and aristocracy of this world have generally been familiar enough with the sciences of the world, and that wisdom which all intelligent creatures may, to a greater or less degree, acquire. But had they been able by worldly wisdom to comprehend spiritual things, they might have understood the true character of Christ, which would have arrested the execution of the purpose of God, in the redemption of his people, for if they had known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

2d. The things spoken of by the apostles and to be preached by the ministers of all apostolic churches, are those of which it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Superhuman qualifications are therefore indispensable to prepare the preacher to set them forth, and the hearer to comprehend them, seeing that our natural faculties, however capacious, have never, can never attain to a knowledge of them. Things that are not revealed to sense, can never be communicated to sense by worldly wisdom, moral suasion, or taught or learned as worldly sciences are communicated.

3d. The things spoken by the apostles and to be reiterated by the ministers of Jesus, are those which are revealed unto us, (the church of God) by the Spirit. Things which are, or can be learned by application to study, in schools or colleges, are not the things which the apostles preached. They preached among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ; and things which are unsearchable, like their divine Author, cannot be found out by the searching of men; for if they could, they would not be unsearchable. The Spirit, and that Spirit only, can search the deep things of God. The argument of the apostle in verse 11 of the same chapter is conclusive: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "Now, (continues the apostle) we (the saints) have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; and this Spirit of which the saints are born, is not the spirit of the world, which involves worldly wisdom and human policy, but the Spirit which is of God, which Spirit constitutes its possessor spiritual, and qualifies him to judge all things, while he himself can be judged of no man. See verse 15. Hence Christ said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see." Cannot see what? Man certainly requires no second birth to qualify him to see natural things. What is it then that a man, however wise or learned he may be, cannot see except he be born again? The kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not visible to unregenerate men, because it is a spiritual kingdom; not composed of flesh and blood, nor meats nor drinks, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. These are things which the apostles preached, and which the carnal or fleshly, or natural mind could not comprehend, as the apostle said: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Finally, the things preached by the apostles embraced the entire gospel of the Redeemer, and nothing else; for a dispensation of the gospel was committed to them, and they shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God. Incomprehensible as the gospel was and is to natural men, it was understood through the revelation of the Spirit of God, by the apostles, and by the same spirit of truth, which Christ promised to send, to lead his people into all truth; it is measurably understood by every one that has been called of God, quickened and taught by the Spirit, and by no other persons whatever. And all others who may attempt to find out the riddle, will be found among those who are “Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” If it be demanded of us to tell why the things of the Spirit are concealed from the unregenerate, the answer is found in the words of him who never spake amiss, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

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I CORINTHIANS II. 13.

(Concluded.)

Second. We notice the manner in which the apostles presented these things in their ministry, 1st, negatively, and 2d, affirmatively. 1st. “Not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth.” These words would be without meaning if there were no men attempting to teach the art of preaching. If there were no schools in Paul’s day established for the purpose of qualifying pious young men for the ministry, there are many in our day, and since the famous schools of Alexandria, there has been no lack of those hot beds of heresy and priestcraft; but the apostles and ministers of the apostolic order did not avail themselves of any qualifications from them. If our limits would admit, we would dwell largely on the manner of wisdom which man teacheth. First, it is human wisdom, and such as the natural mind of man, with out a knowledge of God, or the things of the Spirit, is susceptible of. Secondly, it is that which God disapproves of, and which, being opposed to the wisdom of God, is foolishness with God. It is that kind of human policy which leads false apostles and graceless ministers to handle the word of God deceitfully, giving flattering titles to men, such as Rev., A. M., and D. D., with such other titles as fashion may render flattering. The words taught by man’s wisdom are such as are made use of by those who creep into widows’ houses, lead captive silly women; and such as are employed by teachers heaped to their manufacturers, having itching ears, and who preach for filthy lucre’s sake. The words of those

who bring in damnable heresies – who teach for doctrines the commandments of men; and who for a pretence, make long prayers, influenced by seducing spirits, and preaching the doctrines of devils are words which man’s wisdom teaches. Man’s wisdom teaches to avoid the offence of the cross of Christ, lest the ministry be rendered offensive and unpopular; and to study to please the carnal ears, and feed the vanity of carnal hearts at a sacrifice of the truth as it is in Jesus. Man’s wisdom teaches the preachers, under its instruction, what manner of doctrines will suit the depraved hearts and vitiated tastes of the children of this world; and those governed by it will never present to their hearers that which will be likely to subject themselves to reproach, persecution or a reduced salary. Man’s wisdom has a vocabulary of its own, especially in regard to religious things – words which are capable of a double construction, so that they may be construed in a manner to suit all parties. When worldly men read or recite their sermons, in which they assay to preach and set forth the things spoken by Paul, they are not in the habit of using the plain word *shibboleth*, for they can not frame to pronounce it; but they say *sibboleth*. The pulpits of these diviners never ring with the doctrine of sovereign, effectual, discriminating and irresistible grace; for man’s wisdom teaches that the carnal mind of man will not receive it. The total depravity of fallen man – his entire helpless condition – the necessity of quickening grace, eternal love, cleansing blood, justifying righteousness, and a living union to Christ, are parts of speech, for which their grammar lays down but one rule, viz: to avoid them. There is a considerable confusion in the language taught by man’s wisdom, such as appeared among the ancient builders of Babel, so that those who are so taught cannot fully comprehend each other – their creeds vary as did the sound of the voices of their brethren, the builders alluded to: but, it is always well understood, however discordant their notes, that they always want bricks or mortar, for their people always “Have a mind to work,” not however in building up the waste places of Jerusalem, like Nehemiah and his men, but, like their own type, they build monuments of their own folly. All schemes for proselyting and convert-making by men are productions of man’s wisdom; and, the words employed in that work, whether coaxing, persuading, reasoning, terrifying, threatening or scolding, are taught by that wisdom which is not of God, and which was discarded by the apostles. The wisdom of men, in preaching, leads them to transpose, mutilate and pervert the scriptures – applying the terrors of the law to such as are no more under it; and the consolations, invitations and assurances of the gospel to such as know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The wisdom of man teaches worldly preachers to discriminate between the rich and the Poor, to court the favor of the former, and neglect the latter. As in all the organized societies of false benevolence, goodly seats and flattering titles are provided for and lavished upon the rich, who pay by their tens or hundreds, and some humble place is provided for the poor, who can only ape their wealthy neighbors by handing in their shillings or their dollars. The gospel plan of neither purse nor scrip is quite too antiquated to be taught by man’s wisdom.

All those words, maxims, mottoes and sayings which are taught by man’s wisdom were laid aside by the apostles and primitive ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, lest the faith of their hearers should stand in the wisdom of men and not in the power of God. They denounced the hidden things of dishonesty; they walked not in craftiness, neither handled they the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending them to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. This brings us to consider the affirmative proposition, viz: The manner in which they preached these things.

The first important particular in regard to the manner of primitive preaching which we shall notice is, that those whom the Holy Ghost had designated for that work, were determined to know nothing among the churches save Jesus Christ and him crucified. These comprehensive words comprise all that belongs to the gospel of our salvation. Jesus Christ is the First and the Last, the sum and substance of all that the apostles preached. The Savior, the Anointed, the Hope of Israel, and the Savior thereof; neither is there salvation in any other name. As the Anointed he is full of grace and truth, anointed of the Father, to preside as head over all things to his church, which is his body and the fullness of him that filleth all in all. The anointed Prophet, Priest and King: and him crucified. Christ and the Resurrection. The vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer. His conflict with the powers of darkness. His bitter death and his triumphant resurrection and ascension to glory. Justification by his blood and righteousness, deliverance from the law, the curse, and from all guilt. And all this without anything else to qualify, modify, improve or neutralize it so as to make it palatable to the enemies of the cross. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. – 1 Cor. ii. 2. Paul knew nothing among them about Sabbath schools, Bible classes, Tract societies, Missionary boards, Education sermons, or Total Abstinence lectures. It was enough for him to know Jesus, and the gospel of the Redeemer, and he could recognize nothing else as the gospel.

2d. His manner of preaching was in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. If any man had whereof to glory, Paul was not a whit behind him, but he gloried only in the cross of Christ, by which he was crucified to the world, and the world was crucified to him. If this great apostle to the Gentiles felt weak and trembling when he attempted to preach, how ought we to feel when engaged in the same blessed work? Is it becoming in those who attempt to preach Jesus, to glory in their own strength? Are they the ministers of Jesus who manifest nothing of that weakness and fear and trembling of which Paul spake? When we see and hear men who claim to be the successors of Paul, and the servants of Jesus, vaunting of their borrowed plumage, and offering their prayers and intercession for sinners, and calling them up to anxious benches and altars to receive the benefit of their intercession, can we discover in them anything like the spirit which Paul evinced when he acknowledged he knew not how to pray as he ought, but depended on the Spirit to help his infirmities, and make intercession for him according to the will of God? The truth is, our modern religious stock jobbing revivalists think nothing about conformity, in their prayers, to the mind of God; they desire God to so far change his mind as to adopt their plans, second their motions and grant their petitions. Not so with Paul. He felt his weakness and insufficiency, and cast himself upon the sovereign bounty of his gracious God.

3d. The words in which the apostles spake these things were words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. It is true the apostles were inspired by the Holy Ghost, in a manner which is not to be looked for by the ordinary ministers of the same gospel in subsequent ages of time; but it is equally true that all the ministers of Jesus Christ are required to speak in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, although not by special inspiration, as when he spake to our fathers by the prophets, or unto us by the apostles, still the teaching of the Holy Ghost is as indispensably necessary to qualify the ministers of Jesus to preach, as it was to inspire the apostles to write. The Holy Ghost teaches what words are proper in setting forth Jesus Christ and him crucified, first, in the scriptures; secondly, by his indwelling power and government, opening to the understanding of his servants the things of the kingdom; leading them into all truth; taking the things of Jesus and showing them unto them; also in giving them a door of utterance. As the husbandman must be partaker of the fruit, so he that laboreth in the vineyard of Christ must have

an experimental knowledge of the things which he is required to preach. No one can give evidence that he is called of God to preach who has not learned that the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth are altogether dissimilar to the words taught by man's wisdom, whether in seminaries or elsewhere. But there is another prominent mark by which to discriminate between the ministers of Jesus, and false apostles; those called of God, as was Aaron, compare spiritual things with spiritual; while those of the opposite class compare spiritual things with temporal or earthly things. The force of this truth may be illustrated in many ways; two or three must, however, for the present suffice. First, the ministers of the Lord Jesus compare the instructions of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures, with the instructions of the same Spirit in the experience of all the saints of God; for the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the scriptures, is copied with infallible accuracy in the experience of all the saints, so far as they are taught by that Spirit. It is true the testimony in the scriptures is more extensive – none of the saints have, as yet, experienced all that is recorded in the word, but they shall eventually experience all; and, as far as they have been led, the hand-writing of the Holy Spirit on the tables of their hearts, is a perfect transcript of the same divine truth as recorded in the scriptures. In this therefore the ministers of Jesus shall be known, and the ministers of Satan detected. The experience of God's children responds to the doctrine taught by the learner; for they compare spiritual things with spiritual. But it is not so with the other description of ministers, whatever may be their show of zeal, professions of love, power of eloquence, or how of tears; they do not, they cannot compare spiritual things with spiritual, for the word of God assures us that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But when they attempt to expound the scriptures, all their imagery is of an earthly kind, being themselves unacquainted with the spirituality of the scriptures, they compare them with things which carnal men can comprehend, as the ancient pagans compared the invisible God to images made of various material substances. False teachers, thinking that God is altogether such an one as themselves, draw their conclusion that his purposes, plans and arrangements must be such as they would make. The gospel itself, according to their conception of it, is comparable to their own preaching, a mere commodity which may be estimated in dollars and cents, and transported by the cargo to foreign countries according to the amount of capital they can persuade men to invest in the speculation. The christian's experience as by them described amounts to nothing more than every unregenerate man may possess, such as using means within his reach; and heaven itself in their estimation is a place of carnal amusement, consisting principally of flowery fields, pearly gates, golden walks, and the greeting of old acquaintances, and no small part of the joy of that world, by them anticipated, is to consist in robbing God of the glory belonging to him as the only Savior. Every man that has given sixpence into the missionary or tract funds, is taught by them to expect in heaven to meet some soul or souls who shall ascribe to his liberality the efficient cause of saving him or them from hell and bringing them to heaven.

But, again, the ministers of Jesus, speaking the words which they are taught by the Holy Ghost, compare the spirituality of the law of God with the perfect work, righteousness and blood of the Lord Jesus, while those who speak what human wisdom teaches, compare the spirituality of that law with the ability of unregenerate sinners. The ministers of Jesus compare the perfect and complete salvation of all the elect of God with the provisions of grace in the eternal counsel, the blood of Jesus, and the effectual work of the Holy Ghost, while the others regard the work of salvation as being the work of the creature, depending on means, men and money. The preparation of men to preach the everlasting gospel, being a spiritual work, is, by those who have

experienced it, regarded as equal, by just comparison, with those gifts which Jesus their Prince and Savior received for them when he ascended up on high and led captivity captive. But, by the others, all the qualifications necessary for preaching are, that the preacher should possess that kind of religion which all carnal men can possess if they please, feel a love for souls and a great desire to save more than the number which God has ordained to eternal life; a willingness to make a trade of preaching; a theological education obtained by application to the study of words which man's wisdom teaches; a fluency of speech; a gift for begging money; a readiness to hate and persecute, scandalize and culminate the Old School Baptists; strike hands of fellowship with the workmongers of all denominations, take the total abstinence pledge and promise to sustain all the schemes of the clergy. These prerequisites, together with a call, an outfit, a purse and scrip and as many as two coats apiece, &c., &c., embraces what they regard as the most essential qualifications for preaching the gospel.

If any of our readers think our language extravagant or unwarrantable, in regard to worldly preachers, we refer such to the published statements made by themselves in almost every New School or arminian paper published in our country, and to the doctrines preached by them in their pulpits; and, above all, to the fact that they all practice upon the very principles applied to them in this article.

Let then the saints be on their guard – let Zion prepare to try the spirits that are abroad in the world; and if even angels from heaven bring in new doctrines, or such as Paul preached not, let them be accursed. And if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine (which was preached by the apostles) receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. Beware of men who come unto you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them.

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I CORINTHIANS 3:10-15.

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which

he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by *fire*."

As an apostle, Paul was a wise masterbuilder; and his gift for the apostleship, and wisdom in establishing the fundamental principles of the gospel among the Gentiles was precisely according to the grace which God had bestowed on him to qualify him for the work. By the infallible inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as an apostle of Christ, he had, in all his apostolic teachings, presented doctrinally and practically, Christ as the only foundation; first, on which the eternal salvation of the church is built up, Christ having obtained eternal redemption for his people. Their deliverance from wrath, from guilt and condemnation, and their full, free and complete justification is all founded on him. Secondly, and in the immediate sense of this text, he has shown that all the doctrine taught, all the works performed, all the hopes inspired, with every theory entertained by the saints, if not founded on him, must come to naught. If our faith should lead us to believe what Christ by his word and Spirit has not taught, it is hay, wood, or stubble, that cannot endure the fiery ordeal that shall try every man's faith. What will it avail for a Christian to persuade himself or others to believe any proposition which is not founded on truth? For a time the theory may seem plausible, and pass for truth; but when tested by fire, the delusion is exposed, and all the labor and ingenuity that has been employed in its propagation is lost. In building up the saints in their most holy faith, the apostles have testified that unless our faith be in Christ, on Christ, and the faith of the Son of God, it will be consumed in the day of trial. All the works also of the children of God must be wrought in God, and rest on Christ, as our Commander, or they will be burned up. Whatsoever he has not commanded us, he has forbidden. If then we do the works which he has commanded, these works are founded and rest on him; if they do not rest on him, they are without authority or foundation; for other foundation can no man lay; and if without foundation, they cannot stand. Read the concluding paragraph of Christ's sermon on the mount. "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock." But quite the reverse is the case of those who hear his words, and do them not. See Matthew 7:24-27. Whatever we may do religiously, if Christ's words have not authorized us, will be labor in vain; unprofitable, and subjecting us to loss.

We have an exemplification of these words of the apostle in the Corinthian church, to whom they were addressed. Paul had been laboring among them, and as a wise masterbuilder had preached Christ to them, as the only foundation. They had accepted his doctrine, discarded their former idolatry, and had in many things walked orderly. By conforming to his laws obediently, they had been building on that foundation, but they had also been building on the same Christian foundation many things for which the apostle reproved them. That which they had done by the authority of Christ was like gold, silver, and precious stones, which could endure the fire; but what they had done without his authority was like hay, wood, and stubble, all to be burned, and all that labor lost. The churches also of Galatia, before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among them, had run well, began right, had built on that foundation, gold, silver, and precious stones; but listening to Judaizing teachers, they who had begun in the spirit were so foolish as to suppose they might be made perfect by the flesh; and had been building with hay, wood and stubble. We have numerous examples in the present day. Churches and individuals who have once received Christ as their only foundation have, in some instances, thought they could build faster, and get up their building quicker, and make it much larger, by

working in some materials which will make a fair show when there is no fire to try their works. See churches gathering in front-bench converts, suppressing unpopular truth, embracing popular error, and construing their wonderful enlargement as evidence of divine approbation. All seems to go on well until the day of trial comes when their works are tried by fire; then all that have come in by any other way than the door go out without divine favor.

It is hardly to be supposed that there lives a saint on earth who has not, in any way, at any time, been building on this foundation to some extent with hay, wood and stubble. But the admonition is, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth upon this foundation."

We take the inspired testimony and instructions of the apostles as the basis of our doctrine and practice. They, as wise master workmen, have preached Christ to us as our foundation; on the apostolic platform, or foundation, we go on to build. All our works which are supported by a "Thus saith the Lord," will stand the fiery test; but all we do without that authority will burn like stubble in the day of trial.

We have reason to fear that many of God's children have spent years in trying to establish theories and works which shall at last be given to the flames, and they shall suffer loss. But although all the vain works, and unwise, unauthorized building of the children of God shall be consumed, and they shall suffer loss, yet they themselves shall be saved from themselves, from their works, and from their follies; yet so as by fire. He who sitteth as a refiner and purifier of silver, shall consume their dross, burn up their hay, and wood, and stubble, and bring them out of the fiery furnace like gold that is seven times tried in the fire. "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire."

Middletown. N.Y.
October 1, 1868.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 7
Pages 265 – 267



I CORINTHIANS 3:16,17

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Among the numerous figures employed in the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost and applied to the church of God, this of the temple of God is of frequent recurrence, and, like all others, is appropriate and full of instruction. The temples in Jerusalem, both the first and the second, were

types of the church of the living God, and are applied to her as the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which the fullness of the Godhead dwells. The same apostle who wrote our text has shown in Eph. 2:18-20, that all the election of grace, Jews and Gentiles, are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, a habitation of God through the Spirit. Peter also uses the same figure. (1 Pet. 2:4-7) The history of the building of the temple by Solomon, and also by Zerubbabel, the selection of the materials, the places where they were found, the manner of their being gathered and brought to the building, their preparation for the places which they were ordained to occupy, the perfect harmony in bringing the parts together, the arrangements, consecration and appropriation of the whole, beautifully illustrate the glory of that house whose maker and builder is God. In his application of this figure in the text on which our views are desired, Paul calls our attention to the foundation on which the temple rests, the sanctity of the building as the temple of God, its consecration as the dwelling of God by his Spirit, and the fearful consequence of a desecration of it. The foundation is Jesus Christ, and no other foundation can any man lay. No other foundation can sustain the building. This foundation is of God, it stands sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are his." He is the foundation and chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.

This temple of the Lord is holy, for God has consecrated it and set it apart as a habitation of the Spirit; nothing unclean is allowed to enter it. It is a place for worship, a house of prayer. In it God has placed the ark of the covenant, the mercy-seat, the cherubims of glory, the golden pot of manna, the fruit-bearing rod of the priesthood, the golden candlestick, the shewbread and all the holy furniture belonging to his house. Thither the holy tribes of the Lord go up, and here the God of Israel meets his chosen ones and communes with them over the mercy-seat, between the cherubims. It is no light matter then to defile the temple of the Lord. By reference to the types in the ceremonial law we learn in what manner the sanctuary of the Lord was defiled. See Lev. 15:3 1; 20:3; Num. 19:3; Psalms 79:1; Ezek. 5:11; 7:22; 23:38,39; Zeph. 3:4. Those who defiled the sanctuary of the Lord under the Mosaic law were to be put away from the congregation of the Lord, or put to death, and under the gospel dispensation they are to be destroyed, at least so far as relates to their privileges in the church of God. By a careful reading of the passages referred to above, it will be seen that the Israelites defiled the sanctuary by their own uncleanness, by their contact with things which were unclean, by idolatry, and by a profligate priesthood or ministry. As God's sanctuary was holy, and the Israelite was required to keep his foot when he went into the house of God, so God's church, which is his true or antitypical sanctuary, is a holy and consecrated place, and no spiritual Israelite is allowed to defile it by his own inventions, issues, doctrines, plans or works, nor by holding fellowship with things unclean. There must be a coming out from the world, a separation from Antichrist, and a renouncing of false doctrines, ordinances, and of all religious institutions which are not clearly authorized by the law of Christ. The temple of the Lord is not to be used as a place of merchandise or traffic. When the carnal Jews had made void the law of God by their traditions, they were charged with making God's house of prayer a den of thieves. Their excuses for thus defiling the temple were as plausible as the excuses made by the Pharisees of modern times. The Jews from distant nations were required to bring their offerings to the temple on certain occasions, and as it was inconvenient to bring their oxen, sheep, lambs, kids and doves so great a distance, the pious Jews and accommodating Levites had conceived the idea of having a stock of offerings on hand, which they could supply to the worshipers for a small percentage, and so make the temple-worship more convenient, and

the hardship of complying with the divine command more easy; so a market was established in the temple. And as the money to be put into the Lord's treasury ought not to bear the superscription of a Roman prince, it was a great accommodation to the pilgrim Jew to find money-brokers in the temple ready to exchange, for a small discount, their uncurrent funds, so the tables of the money-changers were allowed a place in the temple also. But all these pious pretenses did not avail them when our Lord entered the temple with a scourge of small cords, and drove the traffickers out, and overturned the tables of the money-changers.

“My Father's house, said he,
was made A place for worship, not for trade;
Then scattering all their gold and brass,
He scourged the merchants from the place.”

Answering well to this figure, in modern times a great amount of religious merchandise is carried on in what is claimed to be the temple or church of God. Almost everything is offered for a price. Salvation, grace, justification and a passport to heaven are offered conditionally to all who are disposed to make a bid, and memberships, directorships and honorary titles and positions are crowded into the market, while a very brisk trade is carried on in Sabbath Schools, Mission, Tract and Bible Societies, Theological Seminaries and other wares of the kind; all of which, if brought into the temple of the Lord, would defile that holy place. Mystery, Babylon the Great, is described in Revelation 18 as a great market; her merchants drive a heavy and lucrative trade in merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple and silk, and scarlet, and all thyme wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men, and of fruits which their souls lusted after. But the value of Zion's commodities is far above rubies; they never were bought nor sold, all are freely given and freely enjoyed by the people of God without money and without price.

But the solemn warning in our text seems to be given to the saints who belong to the building. They are under a solemn charge, lest they should defile the temple or church of the living God; they are not permitted to bring in anything that defileth; they who bear the vessels of the house of God should have clean hands, and all the members of the church of God are required to put off the shoes from off their feet for the ground on which they stand is holy. They are to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Their hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water. They are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. They put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, and they are called to walk in all the ordinances of the house of God blameless. Such is the high vocation wherewith they are called.

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” This admonition seems to have reference to their works. Paul says he has laid the foundation, and warns the saints to take heed how they build thereon; for every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. If any man's works abide (or stand the fiery ordeal) he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. To attempt then to build on this foundation hay, wood and stubble, is to defile the building; but God will try every man's works by fire, and all that will not stand the test

shall be burned, consumed, destroyed. “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.” Yea, and the prophet says he shall sit as refiner’s fire and as fuller’s soap, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

We understand then that God will, by his dealings with his children in Zion, in subjecting them to fiery trials, bringing them through the furnace, burn up all their hay, wood and stubble, and if any are found in the Christian profession who have nothing but hay, wood and stubble, they shall be utterly consumed, according to Malachi 4:1. It shall leave them neither root nor branch. But God’s own children, though they suffer loss, so far as their works are concerned, shall themselves be finally saved, yet so as by fire. The discipline of the house of God, the laws of the kingdom of Christ, shall separate from the communion of the saints those who walk disorderly, and their expulsion from the fellowship of the saints and from the privileges of the church of God, will answer to the figures in the ceremonial law, wherein the offenders were put to death, or separated from the congregation of the Lord. “For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” There was no evasion of Moses’ law, neither shall the saints evade the law of Christ. He will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes; nevertheless his loving-kindness he will not utterly take from him, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. “My covenant [saith God] 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 for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.” (Psalms 89:34-36)

In conclusion, let us bear in mind the distinguishing grace bestowed on us in assigning to each his place in the house of God, as component parts of the building, as lively stones built up a holy temple in which God has condescended to dwell, and where he has said he will dwell forever, for he has desired it for an habitation. What astonishing dignity has he bestowed on us, how high and holy the calling, how honorable the position! Consecrated and set apart for a habitation of God by his Spirit. With what reverence and godly fear then does it become us to serve him in all things, and let us beware that we defile not the temple of the living God.

Middletown, N.Y.
August 1, 1863.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 5
Pages 386 – 391



I CORINTHIANS 4:15

Brother Beebe: I will renew my request which I made one year ago, for your views on I Corinthians 4:15: “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye not*

many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” By complying with this request you will oblige many who are inquiring after the truth, some of whom seem to be entangled with the means doctrine. It is for their sake that I make the request.

James Osburn.
Leesville, Ia.
January 1, 1866.

Reply: Amidst the numerous applications for our views on various passages of the scriptures, we had overlooked the former request of our beloved brother. Even now we may not be able to satisfy the inquirers after truth, much less stop the mouths of gainsayers who pervert the scriptures in vainly assaying to torture them into a seeming support of their delusions; but with such ability as the Lord may give, we will attempt an elucidation of the text.

By instructors in Christ we understand the apostle to mean those teachers in the church which are by the church looked up to for instruction, and are recognized as pastors, teachers, and other gifts designed “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, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:12-16).” By instructors *in* Christ, we must understand those who are recognized as in his body, which is his church, and of these we are told that Christ, when he ascended up on high, “Gave some apostles; some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers.” Now all these gifts are employed for the instruction of the saints; to enlighten their understanding, that they may not only enjoy the comfort of a clear understanding of the truth; but be also protected from the slight of men, who, like wily means-users, lie in wait to deceive the saints. Of these gifts the church of Christ may have ten thousand; or whatever number God is pleased to supply, and yet of all these there may be but few possessing the peculiar gift of qualification of fathers, as we will presently attempt to show.

If by *instructors*, we may be allowed to include all the teachers who find their way into the various organized branches of the Christian church, it would swell the disproportion of fathers and instructors to an inconceivable extent, especially in these “last days,” wherein many “shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” “For the time will come,” (yea, it has already come) “when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (II Timothy 4:2,4).” “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and shall bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (II Peter 2:1-3).” Among this description of instructors there are no

fathers to be found. “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (II Timothy 3:6,7).” This sort has been described by our Lord as coming in sheep’s clothing, while inwardly they are ravening wolves. We are commanded to beware of them! There are no *fathers* among them; no parental regard for the welfare of the flock, for they are without even natural affections, truce breakers (they will violate their most solemn covenants). They are *false accusers!* Don’t forget that this is a prominent trait of the sort spoken of. Moreover, they are *incontinent*, however sanctimonious they may seem to be; for they are slaves to lust. It is also said of this very sort, they are fierce, like tigers howling for blood, their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways, and of the way of peace they are totally ignorant. They are “despisers of those that are good.” Traitors, however loyal they may profess to be to earthly powers, to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places to which they have professed allegiance, they are recreant and defiant to those into whose confidence they manage to insinuate themselves by false professions and false pretenses; they are treacherous. “Heady and high minded,” are special characteristics of this sort. They assume to know more than seven men who can render a reason, and are wise above what is written, and are of the sort to whom Job, in biting sarcasm, would say, “No doubt ye are the men, and wisdom will die with you.” High minded, but not in an honorable sense; but lofty and towering in their vain imagination. Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Carnal pleasures. Ever ready to sell their professed Lord for less than thirty pieces of silver, and to betray him, his cause, his truth, or his people, with a perfidious kiss. Yet with all these marks branded upon them, like the mark of Cain, they “have a form of godliness.” They wear the coat of the sheep, to deceive the flock of God, and to conceal their abominable wickedness. But these painted hypocrites may still be known, notwithstanding their disguise, if their track, especially their back track, be closely examined. Trace these grievous wolves back to their secret lair, and you will find that many a confiding flock has been torn and scattered by them. Wherever they have been intrusted with the pastoral care of the flock, that flock has either been corrupted by them, or it has dwindled away under their instructions. And when detected in their deceitful working, and expelled from fellowship, like the devils of whom we read, when cast out, invariably tear and rend the church or body out of which they are cast. And very generally when so expelled, they find some herd of swine ready to receive and hurry with them away to a swift destruction.

The apostle certainly was aware that such false teachers would infest the church of God; for he found such in the churches of Galatia, and would that they were cut off, for they troubled and bewitched the saints, and he knew full well that after his departure, grievous wolves would come in to the church of Ephesus, not sparing the flock. And with prophetic inspiration he gave warning of their increase in the last days, but still he could only speak of their being in Christ, so far as related to their connection nominally with the church which is his body. They are not in Christ vitally, or experimentally, nor by having entered into his fold by the door of the sheepfold, but as having climbed up some other way, proving that instead of being fathers, they are thieves and robbers, whose work is to steal, to kill, and to devour. But whether the apostle designed to include these false teachers with the ten thousand instructors in the church whose vital relation to the body of Christ we have no right to question, who while they have gifts which are useful for instruction, are totally destitute of every qualification to be fathers, we will not say.

If we confine the apostle’s meaning to those instructors who are divinely qualified with gifts for instructing the saints, and who are and have been useful as instructors, do we now discover many

of them who lack the peculiar traits of fathers in Israel? As a prophet of the Lord, Jonah was a qualified instructor, and has given us instruction by the word of the Lord that “Salvation is of the Lord,” but Jonah was entirely too impatient, peevish and fretful to discharge the duties of a loving, watchful provident, and careful father. Moses was faithful as a servant, but too austere and severe to feel a fatherly tenderness for erring children. A mere instructor may impress many useful lessons on his pupils with his rod; but parental love and tenderness belong to a father, and the father feels a solicitude for the children which none but fathers can feel. Have we not known in our day preachers who seem to be remarkably apt to teach, almost inspired to dive deep into the sublime mysteries of the gospel, very clear and sound, and edifying in their elucidation of the more obscure portions of the scriptures; who in their every other trait of character were entirely unsuited for a pastoral relation to any particular branch of the church? Indeed it has become proverbial of some instructors, “When in the pulpit, they never ought to go out; and when out they never ought to go in.” Their impetuous rashness, imprudent carriage, unbecoming levity, foolish jesting, uncouth extravagance of language, cold unsympathetic treatment of brethren, especially when under trials which require the most careful and tender treatment, carelessness in regard to the discipline and order of the church of God, unexemplary habits, high, austere, or haughty bearing, rendering themselves unapproachable to the tender timid lambs, or the opposite extreme of low and reckless familiarity and companionship with those who scoff at sacred things. All, or any of these faults tend to disqualify for parental usefulness in the house of God. But few, alas! too few of us who hold a position in the ministry, or otherwise as instructors, can say in truth that our usefulness in our holy calling has not, is not restrained by some or all of these evils. The peculiar qualifications for and characteristics *of fathers* in the house of God will be more fully considered in connection with what we propose to write on the last part of our text: “For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel,” which, for want of room in this number, we must defer until our next.

(To be continued.)

Middletown, N.Y.
January 15, 1866.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 6
Pages 286-290



I CORINTHIANS 4:15

(Concluded)

In resuming our remarks on I Corinthians 4:15, we propose to treat more fully on the affirmative, in regard to the indispensable requisites which constitute relation of position of a father in the

church of God, in the sense in which the word is used in our text. As a progenitor, or author of our spiritual life, or rightful claimant of our supreme devotion, filial love, reverential fear, and implicit obedience, the saints of God are forbidden to call any man on earth father: for One is their Father, even God. They are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. The life therefore developed in that birth must be ascribed to God alone. But in the illustration of the various gifts which God has given to his church, the apostle has, as he tells us in verse 6 of the same chapter, “In a figure transferred this to himself, and to Apollos.” Not to exalt himself or Apollos by an assumption of titles applicable to God; but for the very opposite object. “That ye may learn in us not to think of *men* above that which is written; that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.” The apostle in thus transferring the figures employed in this chapter to Apollos as well as to himself, gives us to understand that the term is applicable in the sense in which it is used to other ministers of the gospel besides the apostles, but not properly applied to all instructors, or there would be no disparity between instructors and fathers. We therefore may search for the marks of distinction by which we are to discriminate between those instructors which are, and those who are not fathers.

We infer from the manner in which the apostles John, Peter, Paul and others have used the term, that it is designed not only to signify seniority of membership in the church, but certain peculiar qualities bearing analogy to the patriarchal or fatherly relation to, and care for, the children.

In our former number we pointed out many of the opposite traits which some instructors have betrayed. We will now attempt to show what are some of the distinguishing qualities or characteristics of fathers in the church of God.

First. Those who from long experience, wholesome training, and spiritual gifts are especially qualified to be useful by their counsels, instructions and examples to the younger and less experienced members in the church.

Second. Those who from long and faithful deportment have secured the well-placed confidence of the saints.

Third. Those who are sound in the faith, and deep in their understanding of the scriptures: orderly in their walk, sober and grave, yet humble and courteous in their deportment.

Fourth. Those who are familiar with the laws and discipline of the church of God; and careful to observe and contend for the order of the house of God.

Fifth. It is highly important that fathers in the church should render themselves perfectly accessible to the veriest babe, the weakest and most trembling child in the church.

Sixth. Those who are qualified to be fathers in the church will show a father’s affection, care, solicitude and untiring devotion to the spiritual welfare of all the family.

Seventh. As affectionate and faithful fathers feel a responsibility resting upon them to do all in their power, by diligent and indefatigable labor, or sacrifice of personal ease and comfort, for the benefit and well being of their family, so those who are to be regarded as fathers in the house of God will show a corresponding devotedness to the best interests of the children of God. Not only to those who have been enabled to come forward and openly profess the religion of Christ, but they will be quick to discover those lambs that may be bleating around the fold, trembling and

diffident about making their trials known; giving to such wholesome instruction, comforting words, and fatherly instructions.

But the particular sense in which the apostle in our text claimed to be a father is that he had, in Christ Jesus, begotten them through the gospel. We presume it is on this form of expression that the Arminians and means-advocates cavil, and on which brother Osburn more especially desires our views.

Now the simple question is, in what sense does Paul claim to have begotten the Corinthians through the gospel? If, as Arminian cavilers contend, their regeneration, as subjects of saving grace, was effected by the efforts of Paul in preaching the gospel to them as a means of grace, it must then follow that they were as Christians begotten and born, not of the Spirit, but of Paul, and consequently not the children of God but of Paul; not heirs of God, but heirs of Paul. Very unlike those spoken of in John 1:12,13, to whom God gave power to become the sons of God, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Now let us see the inevitable bearing of this logic. Paul is admitted to be a son of God, for God himself called him when on his way to Damascus, without any intermediate agency. Well now, admitting the Corinthians were begotten by Paul, what is their relation to God? Can it be any nearer than that of grandchildren? If that relation is near enough to suit the means advocates, we are certain that nothing short of the relation of sons of God will suffice to make us joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ to an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. But Paul himself repudiates the absurdity, and denounces the theory as carnal. "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Appolos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything; neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (I Corinthians 3:5-7)."

Thus we see that the apostle repudiates the idea of his having power to beget children for the Lord. To be the children of God we must be begotten immediately of God himself, as the scriptures everywhere affirm. It never was so in nature, that one could beget children into a relationship to another: how absurd and ridiculous then to talk of Paul's having begotten the Corinthians into the relation of sons and heirs of God. It is not, it cannot possibly be, that Paul intended to express any such thing. But the question then will return, what did he mean by the words, "For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel?" The answer, to be in harmony with all that Paul himself has said upon the subject, and all that the scriptures teach, must be that Paul and these Corinthians addressed were in Christ Jesus; not out of him to be brought in by Paul or Apollos, or by anybody else; and in Christ Jesus they sustain certain relations to each other as fellow-members of Christ. The position of Paul in the body, on which he claims the relation of father, is that himself and Apollos were ministers of Christ, called, qualified and sent forth to preach the gospel, and to proclaim among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and that under their divine commission they were the ministers by whom these Corinthians *believed*; not by whom they were redeemed from hell or quickened from death. How did these brethren believe by Paul and Apollos? Let Paul himself explain. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." How as unto carnal? "Even as unto babes in Christ." Now, as babes in Christ, they were already begotten and born of God, or they would not have been babes in Christ. "I have fed you with milk," as a nursing father, in adapting his instructions to their weak condition, so that they could understand his

language, comprehend his meaning, and digest the food ministered to them. Babes, to be susceptible of food, even of milk, must be living babes. Even milk cannot be fed to the unbegotten or the unborn babes, nor to any but living children. These, being babes in Christ, are babes in life, for Christ is the life of all his children. If they were not alive, feeding them with milk would not make them live; or if they were not babes in Christ they could not possibly be fed with the sincere milk of the word. This Paul has clearly proved in the preceding chapters of this epistle. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." How unnatural it would be for a father to attempt to feed either milk or meat to a dead child, especially when he knew and had declared positively that they could not possibly receive it. But when the children of God are born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever, then, and not until then, can they desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby. By the ministry of Paul and Apollos, these brethren had been so instructed and fed, that they had grown and were still growing; and as transferring the figurative language to himself and Apollos, he speaks of having been with them from their early infancy, imparting to them that instruction which their heavenly birth and spiritual life had qualified them to receive with joy, and by which they were through Paul's ministry inducted, or figuratively born into the more full understanding of the gospel; the light and liberty of the children of God, who are taught and instructed by and through the gospel ministry. It was in this sense that Paul called Timothy his son, and the beloved John claimed all the scattered saints as his little children. In this application of the figure, Paul appealed to the members of the Galatian churches who had received the Spirit, and who had run well, saying, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you, etc. (Galatians 4:19)." If he travailed of them again, he had travailed of them before. As an anxious parent earnestly desiring that they might bear the image of Christ, to which end his former travail and labor had been successful; now that error, in the form of legality, meansism and Arminianism had bewitched them, again he travailed in birth, that their former beauty might be restored, and Christ, not Moses, be formed in them, so that they might again reflect his lovely image.

By his administration of the gospel, which is Christ to them, Christ was reflected or *formed* understandingly in their hearts, so that in the exhibitions of their faith they presented Christ, and not Moses or Old Testament doctrine.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Middletown, N.Y.

February 1, 1866.

Editorials Volume 6 - pgs 290-294



I CORINTHIANS 5:4-8.

Dear Elder Beebe: If it is not taxing your time and patience too much, you will confer a favor on me by giving your views on I Corinthians 5:4-8.

Yours in Hope of eternal life,
Mary J. Dinslow.
Bowdoinham, Me.,
December 12, 1866.

Reply: The text submitted is lengthy, and presents a vast field of weighty considerations, involving the order and discipline of a gospel church.

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

In the preceding verses of this chapter, the apostle calls the attention of the church to a case of disorder, involving not only the guilty party in a wicked course of so great notoriety as to be a common report, but of a magnitude which even the Gentiles would consider degrading and insufferable; but involving, also, gross disorder in the church in neglecting the laws of Christ which he has given for the discipline of the church, by which the offender should have been put away from fellowship. In reprovng the delinquency of the church, the apostle points out the course which the order of the house of God demands, and these special instructions are to be strictly adhered to and complied with in all the churches, and throughout all time. In complying with the request of sister Dinslow, we will briefly notice the indispensable rules for the organization of the church for the transaction of church business.

First. The convocation and all her action should be in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly. The church should be convened, every member, if possible, in his place.

Thirdly. The church has no authority to transact any business relating to the order of the house of God, unless the spirit of Paul pervades the church; and,

Fourthly. The power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the absence of any of these four requisites, no church can be duly organized for administering the laws of the kingdom of Christ.

One. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, is summed up all the right or authority that any assembly or community can possibly have for assuming to be a gospel church. His name is the strong tower of his flock, and the righteous can find safety there, but nowhere else. In his name they have a vital interest. Only in his name can they approach unto God. In his name they are baptized into the one body over which he in all things presides as their head, and on which body and head alone his name is called. And it is in his name, as their *Lord*, their rightful proprietor,

their blessed and only potentate, having a full and unreserved dominion over them, they are authorized to assemble and transact the business of his house. Their convocation, and all their actions should be in his name, as signifying that all is done by, and in obedience to his special and supreme commands. No other authority is sufficient. No king or potentate of earth, no pontiff, cardinal, priest or bishop, can be admitted in his place. Nothing short of “Thus saith the Lord” will be allowed by this apostolic rule. His name alone gives validity to his laws and ordinances, rules and instructions; they are all binding on his disciples, simply because they bear his name, as being enacted by him, and in his name enjoined upon his church. This was the highest, and, indeed, the only authority ever claimed by the apostles of the Lamb. In his name they preached, baptized, wrought miracles, and set all things in order in all the churches. For his name they suffered persecutions and reproaches, and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name. What authority has any church to labor to reclaim delinquents, or to exclude the incorrigible, aside from that authority which bears his name?

Two. “When ye be gathered together.” When the laws of Christ require to be executed in the church, it is required of his disciples to come together for that purpose. No member of the church, unless providentially hindered, has a right to be absent. They are forbidden to forsake the assembling of themselves. The church is required to be gathered together, in the name of Jesus Christ, their Lord, whenever the order of the house of God calls for the assembling of the saints.

Several good reasons may be urged why the church should be convened for the transaction of whatever business Christ has, by his apostles, enjoined. One reason is, because all are alike interested, and equally responsible, according to their ability, for the faithful observance of the laws of Christ, and they cannot shift off their responsibility on others. Much trouble and disorder has been painfully felt when members, instead of assembling with the church for business, have shown a readiness to do their full share in whispering or openly talking over the affairs of the church in private interviews with one or more of the members; and, in such a clandestine manner, are sometimes very free to give their judgment or decisions in regard to difficulties which concern the church or involve any of her members; and thus bias the minds of others by expressing opinions or convictions in private, which if expressed before the whole church could, if wrong, be easily corrected. The whole wisdom of the church and all her gifts, helps and governments are required, and to secure them all the church must be gathered together. No rule is given by the apostle for the church to act, in such cases as he has named, without coming together. Nor is it enough that the church be assembled, but being gathered, it is important:

Three. To have an evidence that the spirit of Paul is there. “When ye are gathered together, and my spirit.” By the spirit of Paul we understand the spirit which God gave to Paul, and to all the other apostles when they were endued with power from on high, as apostles of Christ, to sit on the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The apostles were inspired by the Holy Ghost to set all things in order, and to teach us to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded them. But with all their inspiration, they were barbarians to all who were not quickened and led by the same spirit by which they were inspired. The same spirit by which they were inspired to rule in judgment is required to be in us, that we may be profited by their instructions and decisions. Jesus said to them, “When the Son of man shall sit upon his throne, then shall ye also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Our Lord now sits on his throne, and so do also all of his apostles on their thrones of judgment. But the apostles are not now present with us in body, neither is the Son of man any more in the flesh. But as Christ,

by his Spirit, is with his church and dwells in every heart, so the apostles are in the spirit of their apostleship seated in judgment in every apostolic church, where Jesus is honored as King in Zion, filling the throne of his glory. Hence the apostle says, in the third verse of this chapter, “For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already.” There can no case come up before the church of God which the apostles have not officially already judged, and their decisions could be no more weighty or decisive if they were with us in body. It was not their bodily presence that gave validity to their decisions; but it was the spirit of inspiration which they possessed; and in that spirit they are still in, and compose an important part of, the church of God, the ground and pillar of the truth. A church, therefore, where the spirit of the apostles is not, cannot be an apostolic church, and consequently has no authority to execute any of the laws of the kingdom of our Redeemer.

Four. “With the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.” By the *power*, in this, as in many other scriptures, is intended the authoritative power, which embraces all power in heaven and in earth. Having supreme and universal authority in his kingdom, no church which disputes the supreme power and unrestricted authority of our Lord Jesus Christ can be competent to transact any of the business of his kingdom. If any man have not his Spirit, he is none of his; and all who have his Spirit recognize in him all the power and glory of the Father, and by that Spirit they will humbly adopt the language taught by him to his disciples, and with them freely acknowledge to him, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever, and ever. Amen.”

A church thus organized is invested to act in the name, and by the authority, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and her acts being performed in his name, in his Spirit, and by his authority, are recognized by him as his acts, and therefore most solemnly binding. But mere decisions by a professed church, carried by a majority, where this order is not preserved, cannot be so regarded.

Having thus shown, in the case of the Corinthians, what should be the order of the church for the transaction of her legitimate business, the apostle proceeds to instruct them how to proceed, and what to do in the case which was before them. “To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Satan is the prince of the power of the air; the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. He is the opposite of the Spirit of truth and holiness, in which all who are born of God are called to walk. As many as are led by the Spirit of God are to be recognized in the church as the sons of God, and as long as they manifest that Spirit they are entitled to the fellowship of the church; but when they depart from the faith by giving heed to seducing spirits, and by adhering to doctrines of devils, that fellowship is to be withdrawn from them. The withdrawing of the fellowship from those who walk disorderly is to deliver them over to the spirit by which they are led. As it was said of Ephriam, when he was joined to idols, “Let him alone,” that he might be filled with his own way. When the church by an act of exclusion relinquishes her authority and watch care of one who has had a standing with her, she formally delivers that person to that society and company of the spirit to which he is inclined. As when the Lord withholds from us his presence, we are for the time left to the buffetings of Satan. It was thus when Peter required to be sifted as wheat; he was for a time delivered over to Satan, to the tempter, and for the same purpose, for the destruction of the flesh: that is, of his fleshly propensity to savor the things which were of men. But the intercession of Christ in his behalf secured for him deliverance, and made his severe trial and sifting in the end a benefit to his brethren. To deliver a refractory or disorderly member unto Satan is simply to give them up to their evil passions, or to the spirit by which they

are led. It is not to cherish bitter or malignant feelings against them, or to indulge in imprecations or maledictions against them, but the ultimate good of the offender is held in view. If he be indeed a child of God, when cast out of the fellowship and communion of the spirits, he will soon, like the poor prodigal, be reduced to severe poverty, and find himself a companion of swine, and in a starving condition. All his substance being wasted, his fleshly confidence destroyed, and his fleshly temper checked and subdued, he will remember his father's house, where there is bread enough and to spare. This result will be in the day of the Lord Jesus. That is when the Lord Jesus shall heal his backslidings, and restore to him the joy of his salvation.

“Your glorying is not good.” The manner and circumstances of the glorying of the Corinthians, in the case under consideration, are not stated, only that they were puffed up, and had not rather mourned, that the discipline had not taken its course in putting the offender away from them. And their glorying was not good. “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” This figure of the nature and effects of leaven is very appropriate, and full of instruction, and had a powerful bearing on their case. As the nature of leaven is to ferment, expand, and puff up the lump in which it is hidden, so the *old* leaven of malice and wickedness is active and operative in fomenting discord, disorder and confusion when allowed to remain in the church. It should therefore be purged out.

The leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees, which, our Lord said, was hypocrisy, and of which he bade them beware, had the effect to puff them up, to inflate them with pride, and cause them to expand themselves with the most extravagant notions of their own self-importance. If Christians were not liable to this kind of inflation, they would not have been warned to beware of it. Leaven is secret in its workings, but certain in its operations, and diffusive in its nature; and where it has its course, it will ultimately conform the whole lump to its own nature and quality, so that the whole lump that is leavened, itself becomes leaven of the same kind and quality of that by which it has been leavened.

A Christian, who in his fleshly nature is subject to this fermentation when malice or wickedness is hidden in his mind, comes to think more highly of himself than he ought, and holds depreciating views of others. So also when the leaven of pride, malice or heresy is concealed in a church, its nature is to spread its poison through all the members, and it is certain to do so, unless it be thoroughly purged out. Thus *if* a wicked or malicious person be allowed to remain in the church without reproof, like the one in the Corinthian church, the effect must be like allowing a piece of leaven in a lump of dough, as exemplified in their case, until all the members become “puffed up,” as they were.

Now, as the church of Christ is redeemed from the world, and washed, purged and purified, she is to be a new lump, “Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.” Dead to the law by the body of Christ, and married to him that is risen from the dead. Crucified with him, and now quickened and living by the faith of the Son of God. Put off the *old man* with his affections and lusts, and put on the *new man*, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. With the old leaven purged out, “Ye are now unleavened.” And here the apostle reminds us that, “Even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,” and urges from that consideration that we shall keep the feast, “not with old leaven,” etc. The feast of the Passover was kept by the Hebrews, as God himself ordained, throughout their generations, in commemoration of their redemption from bondage, and deliverance from Egypt, by the uplifted

arm of the Lord, by which he broke their yoke and led them forth in triumph. On that memorable night when God smote the first-born of every family of the Egyptians, the Passover was instituted, and special instruction was given that a lamb of the first year, without blemish, should be slain on the evening of the night of their redemption, its blood sprinkled on the door posts of the dwellings of the Hebrews, and the flesh prepared by fire for the feast, according to the families of the Hebrews. And it was the command of God to them that they should eat the flesh of it on that night, roast with fire, and with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs they should eat it. (See Exodus 12.) And forever, throughout their generations, they should perpetuate the celebration of that Passover feast annually, in the precise manner and form in which it was instituted. This very expressive ceremony was enjoined, not only as a memorial of their temporal deliverance from the house of bondage and God's judgments executed upon the pride of Egypt, but as typical of Christ our Passover, which was to be sacrificed for us, and our deliverance from the wrath and dominion of the law, and from the guilt and penalty of our transgressions, and also to signify the feast which God has prepared in the gospel for his redeemed. While eating of the gospel feast, God has ordained that his people shall taste the bitter herbs, or the trials and afflictions which, like bitter herbs, are needful to correct and sharpen our appetites for the provisions of his table; that we, on whom the blood of our Passover has been applied as a peaceful sign, shall relish the food, and eat the flesh and drink the blood of him who as our Passover was sacrificed for us.

In eating this Passover, it is most expressly commanded that no leaven shall be allowed even in our dwellings during the seven days of the feast. "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

Having thus briefly examined the figure referred to by the apostle, let us observe his application of it in admonition to the Corinthians and to the saints in all subsequent ages of the church. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Christ, the unblemished Lamb of God, the firstling of his flock, the first-born among many brethren, first begotten from the dead, and in all things having the pre-eminence, is the Passover of the spiritual Israel. The consecrated Lamb, whose blood was shed for the remission of our sins, and is applied as a sure token and certain pledge that the angel of divine wrath which shall find out and crush all the adversaries of the Lord, shall pass over us, and shield and protect us from all condemnation. We are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, (every way answering to the figure of the paschal lamb of the Hebrews). Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last days for you who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead and gave him glory, etc. "Christ our Passover was sacrificed," according to the import of the type. And for us, for his church, his spiritual Israel, and he the real, and not the lamb in the type, is our Passover, and as such was sacrificed for us. We are therefore to relinquish the type and accept the anti-type, and in coming to the feast which our anti-typical Lamb supplies, purge out the old leaven of Judaism, abandon the types and shadows, and worship God, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. Purging out the old legal leaven, we become a new lump, though we were leavened, yet now the old leaven being purged out, "Ye are unleavened," and "Therefore let us keep the feast," the

gospel, which is our Passover feast, at which the saints eat abundantly, and drink as Christ's beloved, and live by faith upon the Son of God.

Old things are now passed away; all things are become new. We are no more under the law, but under grace. The old leaven is purged out. Those who retain the old Jewish, or legal, leaven are cut off from Israel; for they cannot live on their own works and at the same time live by faith upon the Son of God. If it be of works it is no more of grace; and if of grace, it is no more of works. "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle (Hebrews 13:10)." Banish, then, all workmongrel leaven from your houses, ye blood-sprinkled tribes who come to the gospel feast. Grace, free, sovereign, saving, almighty grace, be your theme, and Christ your Passover be your song.

"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness." Can a Christian feed on Jesus, as the bread of life, digest the heavenly food, and enjoy its life-inspiring and heart-cheering power, while cherishing malice and wickedness in his heart? Let Christians answer. The apostle Peter also admonishes the saints to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speaking. As it requires but little leaven to leaven a whole lump, so a little malice, or envy, or guile, hypocrisy, or evil speaking, will be sufficient, if allowed to be entertained in a church, to diffuse itself until a whole church may be thrown into a state of fermentation and disorder. What can be more unbecoming in the children of God, coming to the Passover feast to feed upon the provisions of the house of God, than to harbor in their breasts a sullen, morose, and malicious feeling towards a brother or sister of the same household, or even towards an alien, or an enemy? Can we ask our Father in heaven to forgive us our trespasses, while we hold a brother who has trespassed against us by the throat and refuse from our heart to forgive him? We are perfectly certain that with the leaven of malice or wickedness concealed in us, we cannot eat this Passover. Nothing can be more directly calculated to provoke a similar feeling of bitterness in our brethren than for us to indulge in ill feeling towards them, for it works like leaven, secretly producing its malignant effects on those around us. God commands that all this pernicious leaven shall be banished from our dwellings, or the offender who retains it shall be cut off from Israel; he shall not eat the Passover, or feast upon Christ our Passover, or enjoy the melting power of his love in our hearts, unless all this unholy leaven be purged out of us. The love of God shed abroad in us will make us love our brethren and esteem them better than ourselves. Instead of feeling maliciously inclined to injure any one of them, or to speak evil or disparagingly of any one of them, we are amazed at the greatness of the grace of God which has given us the privilege to occupy a humble place among those who seem to us as far superior to us in all Christian gifts and virtues.

To enjoy the gospel feast, let us eat it with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. May the God of all grace thoroughly purge out from us all unholy influences, and evermore give us the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, and may we eat and drink abundantly in his kingdom, and go forth and grow up as the calves of the stall.

Middletown, N.Y.

June 1, 1867.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Editorials Volume 7

Pages 29 – 38

1 COR. VI. 13; HEB. XLI. 1; 1 JOHN III. 9.

THE text 1 Cor. vi. 13. The apostle makes use of what seems to have been used in his day as an adage, by which he illustrates the transitory character of natural things, and by a striking contrast sets forth the redemption of the body, which is applicable to the church as the mystical body of Christ or the individual bodies of the saints. Neither the church as a body, nor the individual bodies of the saints, being redeemed from corruption, are to be polluted by unlawful connection with the world. The Corinthian brethren had probably been guilty of applying to the secular powers to adjust matters of aggrievance between them, which, according to the law of Christ, ought to have been settled in the church; and although as a citizen of the world, "All things were lawful" for Paul that were lawful for other citizens of the same commonwealth, "Yet all things were not expedient;" and in his estimation it were better to forego one's privilege than to carry our matters before the unjust for their decision. If as a body the church be married to Christ, it is a breach of chastity for her to appeal to any other Lord: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit;" and this separation from the world in our church or religious capacity, is as imperiously demanded as constancy is enjoined by the connubial bands.

Heb. xii. 1. The "cloud of witnesses" in this text, we understand to be the same spoken of by the prophet, "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, so the Lord shall make bright clouds." - Zech. x. 1. In illustrating the nature and the power of faith, the apostle has cited a cloud of testimony in the preceding chapter; in addition to which time would fail him to speak of Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, of David also, and of all the prophets. This cloud, like that which once overshadowed Christ and the two disciples, embodies the law, the prophets and the apostles, with their entire testimony centering in our Lord Jesus Christ, and all producing but the one sound, the voice that came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, hear ye him. By this same cloud the gospel church is still encompassed about, and upon this glorious reality the apostle predicates his exhortation: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Many speculations have been offered in regard to the weights and besetting sin mentioned in this text; but to our mind the figure taken from the Olympic races is intended to show that under the gospel dispensation the saints are called to run a spiritual race, in order to which it becomes us to cast aside every weight calculated to impede our progress. Coming out from Judaism, these brethren were much encumbered with Jewish traditions and legal ordinances which belonged to the worldly sanctuary of the old covenant; these would be great hinderances to gospel saints, as we see from the account given of the churches at Antioch and Galatia. Of the latter Paul says: "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?" The weights by which they were hindered, evidently were those legal rites and ceremonies which belonged to the former dispensation, and which were now abolished and blotted out with the hand-writing of ordinances, which were nailed with the Redeemer to his cross. The apostle says, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years;" these observances he pronounces "*beggarly elements*," whereunto they desired again to be in bondage.

In being stripped therefore for their spiritual race, the christian church was required to lay aside every particle of Jewish rites, to touch not, taste not, and handle them not; for as the true substance of what these former ordinances were but the elements or shadows had come, there was no longer any need of the shadows. These Jewish rites could no longer point forward to a

Messiah to come, nor to a spiritual kingdom to be revealed; and as a continued observance of them would imply a still looking for the coming of Messiah and fulfillment of the former promises of his coming, it would of course involve a denial that he had already come. And if Christ had not already come, and become the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe, they were running in vain in regard to gospel ordinances, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Hence we see the necessity of laying aside the law as a rule of life, being lawfully delivered from its dominion and its curse through the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ as the apostle testifies, that if under it at all we are bound to continue there, and as to continue in one place would prevent our running a race, we are altogether disqualified for the christian course if loaded down with legal weights and impediments. These weights are spoken of by the inspired apostle as a yoke of bondage, and as a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear; and the apostles considered that it would be tempting God for them to lay that yoke upon the necks of the gospel saints.

It is frequently urged by arminian speakers and writers that we should, as christians, take all these weights along with us; for, say they, if we are not under the law as a rule of life we are at liberty to sin. But they betray a lamentable ignorance both of the law and of the gospel. While the apostle commands that we lay these weights all aside, he commands that we should run the race set before us, (the gospel course) "Looking unto Jesus (not Moses) as the Author and Finisher of our faith." Our Lord also admonishes his disciples on this subject: "He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looking back, is not fit for the kingdom." Should we run the christian race, looking to Moses or his law, we would have to run backwards, and that would disqualify us for the kingdom of the Redeemer.

If a man in ploughing should place his back to the plough, and look back instead of looking forward, he would be likely to make very crooked furrows; so in running the christian race or following the gospel plough, we must look forward unto Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith. Jesus has gone on before his people, and has commanded his people to follow him; and except they follow him they cannot be his disciples. Who then shall dare to say that in following Jesus we shall be liable to sin? Or that the heaven-born souls, looking unto Jesus and pressing towards the mark for the prize of their high calling, will need Moses with his flaming sword to urge them onward in a different course from any ever taught by him?

When these United States were colonies under the British Government, our citizens could not enjoy a republican form of government, and at the same time maintain a loyalty to the British crown; but when redeemed from the British yoke by the blood of our revolutionary patriots, we as free and independent states had an indisputable right to form our constitution and enjoy our own distinct form of government. So when we were under the law of Moses we were not allowed to claim allegiance to Christ as our King, but were bound to continue or remain in all things written in the book of the law under which we were held in bondage; but when by the obedience and blood of Christ we were delivered from the yoke of bondage, we could, without the charge of rebellion or treason to the old law, bow down to the sceptre of Christ and claim him as our Sovereign and King. In receiving him as our King we receive him as our Law maker, our sole Legislator, and we are, in this relation to him, to regard his law, now written, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of our hearts, as the only and infallible rule of our faith and practice. The sin that so easily beset the Hebrew disciples is undoubtedly the sin which doth also

easily beset the disciples of Christ at this day. There was with them a lamentable want of faith and confidence in Christ, and a strong propensity to be again in bondage to the law. The apostle marveled that the Galatian brethren, before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth crucified among them, were so soon or so easily beset or bewitched with this legal heresy. In order that we then as christians should make good progress in the divine life, we must be stripped for the race, we must lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and look unto Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith.

The other and last passage proposed by A Stranger, is 1 John iii. 9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

This passage is in perfect harmony with those on which we have just offered our opinion. The contrast is most strikingly drawn between the condition of those under the law, and those who are born of God. Those Israelites to whom pertained the giving of the law, were Israelites by a corruptible seed, a carnal or fleshly relationship to Abraham's family, being born in his house, &c., and this seed was not to remain but for a limited period. When the Pharisees came to John's baptism, pleading that Abraham was their father, they were informed that that seed was no longer valid - that it was corruptible and perishable. And our Lord declared most positively to a ruler of the Jews, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again." That seed and birth which brought them into Abraham's house did not qualify them for membership in a Baptist church, neither did it secure them from sin, death and hell; for by grace publicans and harlots were to be brought into the spiritual kingdom, and of these stones God was able to raise up children to Abraham, while the children of the kingdom, the natural seed of Abraham, were to be cast out. The children of the flesh were not counted for the spiritual seed; but "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The principal difficulty in understanding this text is the declaration that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." This has led many to doubt their own experimental knowledge of the new birth; they find so much corruption, depravity and sin in their nature that forbid the thought that they, of all men, are exempt from sin. But let such remember that neither their nature nor their natural bodies are yet born of God. Their bodies are indeed destined to be, when the Spirit of him that brought again from the dead the body of our Lord Jesus, shall also quicken their mortal bodies in the resurrection, then shall they be free from sin in body as well as spirit.

Sin is the transgression of the law, (see verse 4th, same chapter) but whosoever is born of God is redeemed from the law of sin and death. They are not under the law, but under grace. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. has made them free from the law of sin and death. Being therefore no longer under its dominion, they can no longer transgress the law, and consequently they cannot commit sin. in that sense. Although they can and do transgress the law of the kingdom to which they now belong, they cannot be convicted of guilt or sin by the law from which they are delivered; nor is it necessary, seeing that the law of Christ provides that for the transgression of its precepts the offender shall be beaten with many stripes, and this chastisement shall be administered in love for their good, but not in wrath, as sin is punished by the law of sin and death.

It is by the implantation of that seed which remaineth that we have the evidence that we are the sons of God; and this seed is life, it is Christ in you the hope of glory; and this principle of life in us is called the new man, which after God. is created in righteousness and true holiness, and of which the Lord has said, Thou art all fair, my love, I will behold no spot in thee. Although the apostle Paul possessed this abiding seed in him, yet he was constrained to acknowledge that in his flesh dwelt no good thing. He found, as all who are born of God do find, a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin that remained in his carnal members. Hence we hear him saying, "But ourselves also, which have received the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body." - Rom. Viii. 23.

NEW VERNON, N. Y.

Oct. 15, 1842.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Editorials – Volume 2

Pages: 67-73



I CORINTHIANS 7:5, 14-16.

Dear Brother Beebe: Will you or some of your able correspondents be so kind as to give your views through the "Signs of the Times," on I Corinthians 7:5, 14-16, and much oblige your professed brother,

Wm. Davis.

Lisbon, Ark.

June, 1869.

Reply: Corinth, where this church was located, was one of the most magnificent cities of Greece, and famous for its refinement, literature and wealth, but like all the cities of the Gentile world, at that day, sunk deep in pagan idolatry. Among those pagans there were however, as elsewhere among the Gentiles, many Jewish proselytes long before the gospel was introduced among them or any gospel church organized among them. When the apostles and other primitive preachers of the gospel were driven out of Judea by persecution, they went everywhere preaching the word, and some of them found their way into Corinth; and under their ministry God was pleased to gather and organize a church. The Corinthian constituents of that church having been brought up and educated principally in paganism, and now called to ignore it, were perplexed in regard to the different teachings of the Jews and Christians. The Jews holding that all who embraced Judaism should put away their pagan wives; as in the ritual of Moses it was unlawful for a Jew to have a Gentile or pagan wife. The apostles of Christ had taught those who professed the Christian faith, that they were not by the laws of Christ required to adhere to Jewish rites, but being under law to Christ they were required to regard their marriage most sacredly binding. The Corinthian church, we infer from the context, had written to Paul to enlighten them on this

subject. In reply to their written enquiry, as we understand, the apostle shows that the gospel does not require that the disciples shall be married; and on his own responsibility Paul suggests that the unmarried state would be preferable; but that those who were married, or even betrothed, had no right to disregard their solemn engagements. Parties, either married or betrothed, were no longer independent of each other, and therefore to ignore their solemn pledges, and separate from each other, would be to defraud the forsaken party. This he charges them not to do, except it be with mutual consent for a time, and for devotional purposes, and then to come together again. A Christian husband, having a pagan wife, cannot worship together; and if the pagan desires to go to her idol's temple, and the Christian to the sanctuary of the Lord, let this temporary separation be by mutual consent, and for a limited time. To go beyond this limitation would be fraudulent, for neither the husband nor the wife has *power*, that is proprietorship, or the independent right of his or her own body; for they twain are one. It would be fraudulent, therefore, to desert each other, as it would be to deprive the injured party of his or her lawful rights, and thus would give Satan an advantage and bring dishonor upon the Christian profession. "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, [that is a pagan] and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him." Why? Because they are legally bound to each other. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband." That is, sanctified by espousal and marriage; consecrated, set apart exclusively to and for each other, legally; forsaking all others in that relation till separated by death. Else were your children unclean, or illegitimate, born out of wedlock, and therefore illegal or bastards; but in this marriage consecration or sanctification they are holy, or lawful children. The Christian husband does not know but that he may convince his pagan wife of the absurdity and abomination of idolatry, nor does the Christian wife know that her pagan husband may not yet become a follower of Christ; hence the impropriety of ignoring the relation of husband and wife, on account of religious differences.

Middletown, N.Y.
September 1, 1869.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 7
Pages 482 – 484



I CORINTHIANS VII. 16

“For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”

This epistle was written at a time of great affliction, distress and persecution, not only at Jerusalem, but also in the churches which were among the Gentile, every inch of the ground occupied by the church of God was contested by the Jews, and also by the Pagans, and to add to the general distress, many false notions and corruptions had obtained among the members of the churches, as will be seen by carefully reading this epistle. Among other points on which the Corinthian saints required apostolic instruction, was that in regard to their relationship with this world, as husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, espoused virgins, &c. The question seems to have been agitated among them, as to whether their calling of God, their spiritual birth which developed a new and spiritual relationship to the members of the kingdom of Christ, was to dissolve those earthly relations which previously were binding on them. The apostle very clearly shows that as the kingdom of Christ is spiritual and not of this world, it intermeddles not with the civil, social or political organizations which legitimately existed before the setting up of his kingdom in her gospel organization. On this important subject the apostle says, “Let every man abide in the same calling, wherein he was called.” That is, he is to remain in the vocation which he was in when, and previously to his calling. He continues; “Art thou called, being a servant? [for there were very many of the primitive saints, who were held as the servants and chattled property of men,] care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s free man: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.” Therefore he enjoins with apostolic authority that every man shall abide in that relationship that he was in when called. A husband being called by grace, and his wife continuing in unbelief, a Jewish proselyte, or a Pagan worshiper, affords no reason why he should leave her, or if the wife be called, and her husband, still remaining in unbelief, gives her no liberty to leave him, nor does it in the least degree lessen her duties to him as a faithful and affectionate wife. “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife;” that is set apart legally, by marriage. “Else were your children unclean,” or illegitimate; “but now are they holy,” or lawful.

If the husband or wife, who have become disciples of Christ, should be forsaken on that account by their unbelieving partners, it is not their fault. If the unbelieving party will depart on that account, let him or her, as the case may be, depart, but let the forsaken party not marry again, for the marriage cannot be dissolved only by death, so as to give the surviving party liberty to marry again. “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” Here the text on which our views are solicited, comes in: “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” How save them? By a reconciliation. In verse 10, of this chapter, Paul says: “Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.” By reconciliation with him, she retains or saves him. And however indignant, unreasonable, tyrannical, malicious or persecuting he may be in resenting her conversion to the christian faith and practice, although he may forsake her, yet she

must not marry again, while he is living, for she does not know but that she may save him, by a mutual reconciliation; and the same with the husband.

The salvation here intended is not a deliverance from the curse of the law, or from the retributions of the world to come, because Christ is in that respect the only Savior, and there is salvation in no other, but the saving or retaining of the affections and companionship of a husband, or of a wife by reconciliation, is evidently what is intended in our text.

Middletown, N.Y.

February 1, 1858.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Editorials Volume 4

Pages 56-58



I CORINTHIANS 8:5,6

“For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him (I Corinthians 8:5,6).”

Admitting all that can be claimed by principalities and powers, either in heaven or earth, to us, that is to those who are the called, quickened, and spiritually instructed, there is but one supreme ruling power, transcending all the powers which are put under him. He is the only wise God, our Savior. His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. All the powers in heaven acknowledge his majesty, and all the angels of God are commanded to worship him. The four beasts (or living creatures), and the four-and-twenty elders, which represent all the principalities and powers in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, acknowledge him to be the Head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. And he himself declares his supreme power over all flesh, which he must needs possess, that he might give eternal life unto as many as the Father hath given him. When by a commission from him, his apostles were seated upon thrones of judgment, to judge and administer to the twelve tribes of his spiritual Israel, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven (that is the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, with which they were baptized on the day of Pentecost), was given them, expressly to make binding on earth, all their apostolic decisions, they were distinctly informed that the excellency of all this power was of God, and not of them. “He came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. 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 (Matthew 28:18-20).”

In asserting the absolute supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ over all beings, all events, and all worlds, we design in this article to show that in ascending his Mediatorial throne, all temporal as

well as all spiritual authority was vested in him. The apostle in showing what is the exceeding greatness of God's mighty power to his church-ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, adds: "And hath put all things under his feet," and in all this fullness of power over all things in heaven and earth, in this world and that which is to come, "gave him to be the head over all things to his church, which is his body, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:19-23)." We will notice first his supreme power in the heavenly places, and secondly, his supreme authority over all the principalities or departments of power in this world.

First. Christ is supreme, blessed and only Potentate in his spiritual kingdom, the departments of which are called Heavenly Places, wherein are set thrones of judgment; the thrones of the house of David (Psalm 122:5). There are no thrones of legislation: for not even the apostles were allowed to enact any law, or amend, annual, or altar any part of the law of Christ. His princes shall sit in judgment. They shall sit in judgment over his chosen tribes, giving judgment and decision on every part of the law of Christ, and their judgments and decisions are authoritative, for they sit on thrones, and thrones signify places of imperial power. Thus in setting forth the principalities of the heavenly places, the apostles are first brought to view, endowed with power from heaven to administer the laws of Christ, to set in order all that belongs to the organization and travel of the church of God. What they have written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost makes up a full, perfect, and complete directory for the observance of all the children of God throughout all time. The man of God is perfectly and thoroughly furnished to every good work. The primitive church was organized on and in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and only so far and so long as we abide in the doctrine of the apostles, can we continue in their fellowship. What they have bound on earth is bound in heaven; also, what they have loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Next to the apostles in authority are the prophets which God has placed in the church, having gifts from the Lord for the edification of the saints. Thirdly, teachers, in a more general acceptation of the word, as this principality embraces, as we apprehend, all the gifts, or all those to whom God has given ability to teach the doctrine, order, and ordinances of the house of God. The same gifts which are simply called *teachers* in I Corinthians 12:28, are in Ephesians 4, called evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Next to these in their order come the gifts of healing, of helps, governments, tongues, etc., and all for the edifying of the body, the church. None of them are to be despised or unappreciated, for these all being established as principalities in the heavenly places of the church and kingdom of Christ are to be regarded as thrones of power which Christ himself has set. They are to teach, exhort, reprove, and rebuke with all authority. That is with all the authority by Christ invested in them, and that is to be determined by his word. These principalities cannot be disregarded without violation of our loyalty to Christ; for he has said to his servants, "He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me (Matthew 10:20)." The Pharisees were astonished at Christ's doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes; and it is a distinguishing mark of a servant of Christ now, that they, and only they, have divine authority for what they teach. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." But we should remember that it is only when the servants of God speak as the Lord Jesus has authorized them, that they speak or teach with authority. Now all these principalities and powers which Christ our

King has set in the heavenly places of his kingdom are in subjection to Christ as the Blessed and only Potentate. He is exalted not only above, but far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, both in this world, and that which is to come. They are only his servants, acting by his authority, having none of their own. He is the Head, and they the members of his body: and to him they constantly ascribe all power, might, and dominion; saying, “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, amen.”

Should any one therefore attempt to introduce into the kingdom, or to bind any obligations upon the saints which our Lord Jesus Christ has not authorized, whatever their position may be in the church or in the ministry, their effort should be firmly resisted. Even the apostles are to be followed only as they follow Christ. And if Paul or an angel from heaven should teach any other doctrine than that which the apostles have preached, let them be accursed. To hold Christ as the blessed and only Potentate will not allow us to receive from any of his servants, or professed servants, aught in doctrine or order that does not bear the broad seal of his Holy Spirit. All the power or authority any of his apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers can have, or that the children have a right to regard or obey is the power and authority of Christ himself, as he is the only, as he is the Blessed Potentate. And it would be treasonable in any of his subjects to bow to any other sovereign or potentate in his kingdom.

Secondly. The principalities and powers of the earth, as well as all those of the heavenly places, are subordinate to him, whose name and titles are written upon his vesture and upon his thigh; King of kings, and Lord of lords. The boundaries of his government in providence are from the rivers to the ends of the earth. The heathen are his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth are his possession, and all legitimate powers, governments, thrones, and dominions of or over the tribes of mankind are from him; and no power can be exercised over men except by usurpation that comes not from him. He as God of the whole earth has instituted human governments, set up kings, governors, rulers, and judges, limiting their rights to govern within such bounds as to be a terror only to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. Paul gives this as the reason why every soul shall be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. This applies alike to all degrees of power or authority, by special ordinance of God, whether it be vested in kings, governors, presidents, judges, husbands, parents, masters, or wherever it exists, and for the limitation, regulation, and duration, Christians are to examine the ordinance of God in which all these several powers are authorized. The powers are widely different in degrees; the parent or the master has not the power which God has given to kings; but their respective powers to the extent provided in the ordinance is as legitimate in the one as in any of the other departments of human power, and in every case Christians are to respect all these powers and authorities, simply because God has ordained them; not because one man of himself has more right to rule than another. The Christian is to “honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king,” upon the very same principle that servants are commanded to obey or be subject to their masters with all fear, because it is God’s ordinance, and our obedience as children, as servants, and as citizens of states and nations, is, so far as Christians are concerned, that thereby we honor and obey God.

This motive for the submission and obedience of every soul to the higher powers or authorities is urged alike in regard to every grade or degree of authority which God has ordained and enjoined. Children are exhorted to obey their parents, because God has commanded it. It is the first commandment with promise. Servants are commanded to obey in all things their master

according to the flesh; “not with eye service,” as though it were only from fear of man; “as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and to do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men (Colossians 3:22,23).” Obedience to kings, governors, judges and magistrates is by special command of our blessed and only Potentate, to be faithfully rendered, because God has commanded it. Not merely because men have enacted the laws, or kings have decreed them, with pains and penalties, but in the fear of God and in obedience to him. “For rulers are not a terror to good works.” That is those whom God has invested with power, and who are his ministers to us for good. The extent of all power given of God to rule is that they shall be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. They are ministers of God, in the civil department of his government, to protect the law-abiding in all their rights, and to punish those who infringe upon the lawful rights of others; hence the power to be recognized by Christians, although ministered by rulers and judges divinely appointed, is none the less the government of our Blessed and Only Potentate. And all kings, governors, and rulers of the earth, are as firmly bound to rule in the fear of God, observing the limitation of all their powers, as their subjects are to obey them, as the ministers whom God has put in authority over us.

A careful examination will show every candid and honest enquirer after truth that the obligations of subordination, submission and obedience, enjoined on Christians to all the principalities of the heavenly places; that is in the church of God; and their obligations to obey all men who are divinely invested with authority over us in the flesh, as kings, rulers, parents, husbands, masters, and all other institutions of power, to the full extent of the power thus given to them over us, rests alike upon the recognition of the divine power. They should be cheerfully rendered in obedience to our Blessed and Only Potentate, as unto God, and not unto men. It is then as disloyal to our Potentate as for a child to dishonor or disobey his parent, a servant to dishonor or disobey the lawful commands of his master, as it is for a citizen to disregard, dishonor, or disobey the wholesome laws of the state or nation where he owes his obedience.

No man on earth is invested by any ordinance of God with unlimited power or authority. Some have indeed usurped and exercised such power for a season, making the monarch’s will the supreme law. Such were the pretensions of the haughty king of Babylon, when commanding all his subjects to worship his golden image; but God rebuked him, and drove him from the society of men to eat grass with the beasts of the field till he confessed the supremacy of the God who rules over all. No earthly government has any divine right to judge the saints in religious matters; nor has any saint a right to be judged by them in meats, or drinks, or holy days, new moons, or Sabbaths. Nor has any husband a right to dictate the religious faith of his wife; nor has a parent a right to command his child to disobey the laws of God or men; nor has the owner or master of a servant a right to require of him anything that God has forbidden, or that would be in violation of the legitimate laws of the land.

In this view of the subject, we bow our knee, and swear allegiance to our Blessed and Only Potentate, as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and whatsoever we do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men (Colossians 3:23).”

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tongue
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all.”

Middletown, N.Y.
September 15, 1865.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 6
Pages 237 - 243



I CORINTHIANS VIII. 11.

“And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?”

We should bear in mind “that the church of God which was at Corinth,” was composed principally of Gentile converts, who were situated in the very midst of pagan idolatry, and as the members of the church had been pagans from their infancy, until they were called by grace to a knowledge of the true God, it was as natural for them to retain some pagan notions, which they had received by tradition, as it was for the Hebrew converts to retain some improper views concerning the abolished rites and ceremonies of the old covenant dispensation. One prevalent rite among pagans, as this chapter shows, was to make sacrifices of animals to their gods, of whom they had a vast number, and after sacrificing the life of their victims to their gods, the bodies of the sacrificed offerings were eaten in the temples, in honor of the idols to whom they had been offered, or taken away to the shambles, or market, and sold. The pagans seem to have supposed that the offering of their victims to their idols constituted their flesh holy or sacred, and that meats thus consecrated would impart to them a holiness, or make them better. A difficulty had evidently existed among christians in the Corinthian church in regard to the propriety or impropriety of eating things which had been offered in sacrifices to idols, and to settle the question, they had appealed to Paul, as one of the judges which occupied the twelve thrones of judgment, judging the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel, and his instructions in this chapter are in reply to their inquiries. In these instructions he refers them to what they, or some of them, knew, namely: that an idol was nothing in the world: that is that it had no power, no divinity, and that it could not impart to the things offered to it either purity or impurity; it could neither make the meats offered better nor worse. Hence he says in chapter x. 25, “Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, [or market,] that eat, asking no questions for conscience’ sake.” “But if any man say unto you, This is offered unto idols, eat not, for his sake that showed it,” &c. For he assures them that “Neither if we eat are we the better; neither if we eat not are we the worse.” Simply the eating of meats which had been offered in sacrifice to idols, in itself considered, could neither make them better nor worse, because having a knowledge that the idol was nothing, they could eat that which had been offered as though it had not been offered, without defiling their

conscience. Nevertheless, this liberty is not to be abused. There were those in the church for whom Christ died, who were weak, and who had not this knowledge, and were unable to discriminate between eating to express faith in or devotion to the idol, and the eating from the consideration that the earth and the fullness thereof is the Lord's, and that an idol is nothing. In such a case, therefore, for the sake of the conscience of the weak brother, which is liable to be defiled, from lack of knowledge to discriminate, he admonishes his brethren to forego the privilege of eating, and assures them that he would not, while the world stands, eat meat, or gratify his carnal appetite at the expense of the peace of Zion, or if it should cause his brother to offend. The weaker brother was liable to offend in such a case, in a variety of ways, by being grieved at what he, from want of clearer knowledge, supposed to be idolatry, or by imitation of the stronger and more enlightened brother, he, in eating, would actually commit idolatry; in either or any case his conscience would be defiled. Therefore, the knowledge of the one is made a snare to the other. And through thy knowledge, (that the idol is nothing, and that the meat is not at all affected by having been offered,) shall the weak brother (the brother who has not this knowledge or discernment) perish? The word perish, in this case, does not mean to perish eternally, for Christ has said, "And they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." - John x. 28. But Paul is particular in explaining what he means by perishing, in this case, namely: their conscience would be defiled, and they made to offend. None for whom Christ died can fail of eternal salvation, for he has redeemed them unto God with his blood, and made them priests and kings, and they shall reign with him forever; but they may be defiled in regard to their consciences, while here in the flesh.

The term perish, according to our standard lexicons, has among other significations, the following: "to wither, to decay to waste away, to be in a state of decay, or passing away, to come to nothing, to be wasted or rendered useless, as Jer. ix. 9, to be injured or tormented, as 1 Cor. viii. 10.,' And the term is sometimes used to signify final and everlasting destruction, as in 2 Peter ii. 12, not as in John x. 28. The sense in which it is used in our text, cannot possibly mean to be lost eternally, or it would directly contradict the solemn affirmation of Christ, in John x. 28. But it is used as in the case of the prodigal, "I perish with hunger." - Luke xv. 17: to signify suffering, distress, &c., as also in the case of the disciples, Matthew viii. 25, "Lord, save us: we perish." Weaker brethren are not to be damned for the selfishness, unkindness, or knowledge of their brethren, for they are saved with an everlasting salvation, by the blood of Christ, and they shall not come into condemnation, but have passed from death unto life. Still, although their final destiny is irrevocably fixed, they may perish as to their comfort, enjoyments and usefulness, in the sense intended in our text. By the unkind and selfish conduct of their stronger and better informed brethren, they may be led into difficulties, and through their knowledge, which, in the absence of charity, puffeth up, the weak brother's conscience may be wounded, and he left to suffer, pine away, wither, waste away, or be rendered useless, in regard to his gifts or place in the church.

By comparing the instructions given to the Corinthians, in this case by Paul, with those given by the convention at Jerusalem, to the church at Antioch, (Acts xv. 29,) we see why it seemed good to the council at Jerusalem to enjoin on the saints at Antioch, as necessary things, that they among other things should abstain from meats offered to idols. The necessity did not arise from any effect the idol could have on the meats, or any impurity in the meats themselves, nor even in the eating them, when they could be eaten with the proper discernment, but it was necessary on the ground that weak brethren might be involved in difficulties.

Without pursuing this subject farther by way of elucidation of the subject of meats offered to idols, let us draw from this the lesson of admonition which it suggests to the saints of the present day. The law of Christ, which is binding on all his disciples, requires them to bear one another's burdens, and especially that the strong shall bear the infirmities of the weak. The apostle reminds his brethren that the weak ones of the flock were of sufficient consequence in the divine estimation, to be redeemed by the blood of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has loved them and given himself for them, they are therefore those, weak, feeble and ignorant as they may be, for whom Christ died. And if Christ has so loved, as to give himself for them in common with all of his redeemed, will not the same love of God shed abroad in our hearts, incline us to sacrifice the gratifications of the flesh, rather than lay a stumbling-block in their way? Can that love of God which was stronger than death, if it be in us, fail to constrain us, like Paul to forego our own personal gratifications, even in those things which may be otherwise harmless in themselves, though it were to deny our carnal appetites what they crave, rather than disturb the peace of the church of God, or bring distress upon any of those for whom Christ died? We may have knowledge, and if we have, we have cause of gratitude to God for it, but let us not forget that knowledge of itself when alone, puffeth up, and unless tempered with charity, it will be sure to puff us up; but charity is profitable in all things. And if we have all knowledge so that we can understand all mysteries, and speak with the eloquence of men and angels, if we have not charity, we are nothing; mere sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Having then all knowledge to know that all things are lawful to us, may we have charity, or love to those for whom Christ died, to remind us that all lawful things are not expedient, and we are admonished to "take heed lest by any means this liberty of ours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." We may not now be exposed to the temptation of eating meats which have literally been offered to idols, as were those brethren in the primitive age, but are there not many things now existing among and around us, to which this same rule is equally applicable? What is the difference whether it be by our eating meat, or by any other personal indulgence, if the consequence is to cause our weak brother, or brethren, to stumble or to offend? If we love the saints, which we certainly do if the love of God dwells in us, let us bear in mind that it is not good to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby a weak brother for whom Christ died will be made to offend. How important then that all the saints should not only shun what they know to be positive evils, but every appearance of evil. Things which may not, according to our knowledge, involve positive wickedness, yet may have the effect to bring positive reproach on the cause, and to inflict a wound on those who being weak, and having tender consciences, be made to suffer, and in that sense perish. For instance: A brother who is well established in the truth, may go into some of the idol temples, with which our country abounds at this day, and witness the ceremonies and exercises practiced by carnal religionists, without being in apparent danger of contamination, but a weaker brother, by the example, may be emboldened to go, and not being so well fortified, may be tempted to mingle with the adversaries of truth and righteousness, for want of discernment to discriminate, and thereby he may be defiled.

Middletown, N. Y.

August 15, 1856.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Editorials Volume 3

Pages 363-367

I CORINTHIANS IX. 14.

Elder Beebe: Please give your views on 1 Cor. ix. 14: “Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” I want your views particularly on the ordination of God relative to the Lord’s preachers living by the gospel. I presume you believe that what God has ordained comes to pass; if so, why is it that the Old School Baptist preachers generally get little or nothing of a temporal support? Are they not called to preach? or does the ordination of God fail? By attending to the above request you will much oblige an inquirer after truth,

ISOM CRANFILL.

Reply: The word “ordain,” like many other words in our vocabulary, is used to express more than one idea. Sometimes it is used in the Scriptures to express the determined counsel or decree of God, as in Eph. ii. 10. Sometimes it is applied to the setting apart of elders, pastors or apostles to the work whereunto the Holy Ghost has called them, &c.; but in the text under consideration, it is, as we understand it, intended to signify that the Lord had instituted or commanded that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel, just as he ordained, instituted or commanded in the ceremonial law, that they which minister about holy things, should live of the things of the temple, and they which waited at the altar should be partakers with the altars. Even so has he given commandment concerning his gospel ministers, who devote themselves to that work, that they shall be sustained by the brethren. They sow to the brethren spiritual things, and receive from them of their carnal things.

But like all the other commands of Christ, this is sometimes disobeyed, and for this very reason the apostle admonished the church in regard to it. Inasmuch as Christ our King has ordained or enacted this as a law or precept, and made it binding, it should be solemnly regarded by all his loyal subjects.

We certainly believe that the firm decrees of the throne of God shall all be fulfilled. What he predestinates must surely come to pass. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And Christ was ordained before the foundation of the world as a Lamb slain for them who, by him, do believe in God, &c. But when the word is used in reference to his laws and ordinances in the church, it does not express what he has promised himself to accomplish, but what he has enjoined on his saints to do in obedience to his commands.

We certainly believe that Old School Baptist preachers are called to preach, for they are the only class of preachers under heaven that we know anything about who do preach the gospel of Christ, but why they, or any of them, fail to receive an adequate support, would be as difficult for us as for brother Cranfill to tell. In some instances it may be that they are located among brethren that are poor, and unable to be as liberal as they wish, and in some cases it may result from a reprehensible negligence, or disregard for the laws of Christ.

But it is possible that the ministers themselves are in fault. When Jesus sent out the seventy as lambs among wolves, he allowed them not to take purse or scrip with them. They were to rest solely on the indemnity of his name, and leave the whole matter of their support to him, and they returned, and reported that they had lacked nothing. Christ’s ministers are still required to go in

his name, and to rely on his power and providence to sustain them, and if in doing so they lack anything, let them report the matter to him.

Some of our preachers have in protesting against making a trade of divinity, or merchandise of the gospel, been understood to hold that it is wrong for ministers to be supported by the liberality of the saints, and to denounce those who are so sustained, as hirelings. Others again have, by an overreaching greediness of filthy lucre, by storming, scolding, fretting and complaining of the meanness and covetousness of their brethren, disheartened them. The most liberal hearted christians are, probably, as a general thing, those who are the best fed. But there can be no reasonable doubt that too little regard is paid to the authority of Christ by the churches in regard to the obligation laid on them to communicate to the support of those who labor in word and doctrine among them.

Middletown, N.Y.
September 1, 1859.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 4
Pages 265-266



I CORINTHIANS 9:27

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

The above named Scripture is frequently referred to by those work-mongers who deny the efficiency of the grace of God to secure the eternal salvation of those on whom it is bestowed, with a manifest design to make the impression that the apostle Paul taught the doctrine of falling from grace. Infidels themselves in regard to the testimony of God on that subject, they desire to strengthen their skepticism by dragging the inspired apostle into their company. They would make it appear, if possible, that the same Paul who had so constantly and persistently contended that salvation was by grace alone, who declared to the saints at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, that it was by grace they were saved, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast; and who elsewhere contended that if salvation were of grace it could not be by works; and if by works it could not be by grace; and who positively and emphatically declared that it was not of works, but that it was by grace, and grace alone; that this same Paul was, after all, a poor, blind Arminian, and did hold that Christians were liable to fall from grace and be damned if they trusted alone in the grace of God for their salvation. Well did this apostle anticipate their infidelity, their cunning craftiness, and their handling the word of God deceitfully, when he charged them with turning the truth of God into a lie. This they do when they make the Scriptures say what they never said, and testify the opposite of what they have always testified. But it is only necessary to examine attentively, candidly what the apostle and all other inspired writers have said, to expose the deception of

those God-defying skeptics who lie in wait to deceive. Those base deceivers would represent that the works of men are more effectual in securing salvation than the grace of God; for they represent that men may be the subjects of grace, have the grace of God in their hearts, feel its power to the extent that Paul had felt it when God himself had told Paul personally, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and afterwards that grace prove insufficient, they fall from it and perish forever, and that the works of men are more reliable than the Saviour's blood and righteousness; that they may be of the number for whom Christ shed his blood, to whom God has imputed his righteousness without works, and yet if they fail to secure their salvation by their own willing and doing, they will be lost, notwithstanding the grace of God and the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said by the grace of God he was what he was; but they would make him say by his own works he was what he was.

In urging on the Corinthian saints that they should abstain from idolatry and carnal lusts, that they might thereby enjoy the fellowship and communion of all who were of the household of God, he in the commencement of this chapter adverts to his own standing and experience. Of his standing in the house of God, he says, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen the Lord?" etc. His standing was such as could not be questioned as a child of God, an heir of immortality and an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, yet with all this array of incontestable evidence in his favor, to enjoy the confidence and fellowship of his brethren he had to keep under his body and to bring it into subjection. Keep his body under what? Bring it into subjection to what? He has informed us that with his mind he served the law of God, but with his flesh, or body, the law of sin. He found another law, that is, another from the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus. This other law in his members, namely, the members of his body, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which was in his members, for in his flesh dwelt no good thing. He had a continual warfare between the flesh and Spirit. When absent from the body he was present with the Lord, and when at home in the body he was absent from the Lord. The body naturally struggling for the ascendancy in the conflict, but the Spirit warring against the flesh, suppressed the corruptions of the body and kept it under, and in subjection to the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. But why this conflict? Not to save his soul from hell; that salvation was already accomplished, and the assurance given him by the seal of God himself. Why then did he struggle with the corruptions of his flesh? Ah, if he had been an Arminian perhaps he would not, for they have often said if they were only sure that they would be saved at last, they would give a loose rein to all their wicked propensities; they would steal, murder and commit all manner of wickedness, and take their fill of sin. Well, they can never have that assurance until they are born of God, and if they are ever born of God they will never use such language, for they will then find in them a principle which aspires after holiness and struggles against the lusts of the flesh.

But the question is, In what sense Paul, after preaching to others, could himself be a castaway? We understand him to mean in regard to his usefulness to the saints as a minister of Christ unto them. He tells us in this chapter of his labors and sacrifices in the work of the ministry for the sake of the saints. He had waived his right to be supported by his brethren, and had accommodated himself to the condition and capacity of Jews and Gentiles, to the strong and to the weak, that his labors might be beneficial to them. In all his labors and sacrifices he had conferred not with flesh and blood, he had not pursued a course gratifying to the body, but in fastings oft, in afflictions, stripes and imprisonments oft, he had kept his body under and brought it into subjection, that his ministry might be useful to the saints. Suppose that Paul, while

preaching the truth to the people, had indulged the unhallowed propensities of his depraved nature, mingling with scoffers, in rioting, drunkenness, fighting, or in any manner unbecoming his high and holy calling, would not such indulgence of the flesh have lowered him in the esteem and fellowship of his brethren? We have some painful examples of those who preach good, sound Bible doctrine, but their conduct out of the pulpit is such as contradicts the spirit of the truth which they proclaim. We have heard it said of some that when in the pulpit they never ought to go out, and when out they never ought to be allowed to go in. Christ compares his ministers to salt, but he says, If the salt have lost its savor, it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, or cast away, and trodden under foot of men. When cast away from the fellowship and confidence of the saints their preaching cannot be edifying, and if cast out, the world has no use for them, and they are trodden under foot of men.

Middletown, N.Y.,
May 15, 1863.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 5
Pages 362-365



I CORINTHIANS X. 13.

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

We have no special light to impart on the above text, beyond the plain and obvious import of the words in which it is presented, when taken in their connection with the epistle, and the common experience of the children of God, while here in the flesh. From the many disorders which Paul had occasion to reprove in the Corinthian church, it is very evident that the members thereof had not escaped a liberal share of temptations. Temptations arising from their own carnal nature, from the world and from their adversary, the devil, had been many, and quite apparent among them, and they, perhaps, like many a tempted, tried saint of God at this day, may have been ready to conclude that no real christian could be so tempted, or so frequently overcome by temptation as they were, and that if they were what they professed to be, they would not be so tempted. Temptations to do wrong, to please the flesh, and grieve the spirit, which in the saints is born of the Spirit, or to murmur or to fail to appreciate the mercies of our God, are of themselves very trying to God’s people, but how greatly is the trial aggravated when the cruel tempter insinuates that these temptations are evidences that we are not the children of God, or that God will leave us in the power of the tempter, and that we shall never be released from them, that in judgment against us, the way of deliverance shall be closed, and we must perish. To meet and silence all these suggestions, the inspired apostle cheers us with the blessed declarations of the text, which, in its obvious sense, presents the following assurances, viz:

1st. Our case is not as it has appeared to us, peculiar or uncommon, all the saints are subject to the very same, and it cannot by any righteous inference be construed that we are the less interested in the saving grace of God because we are so sorely tempted.

2d. Our faithful God has his eye in love and compassion on us while we are tempted. However unfaithful we have proven ourselves to be to God, God is faithful, and his faithfulness is as enduring as his throne. He will never leave thee nor forsake thee. “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior.” Our God who has promised all this is faithful, and he will certainly accomplish all that he has promised, and make you more than conquerors through him that hath loved you and given himself for you.

3d. The cheering truth is implied in the text that all the temptations which have overtaken us are working for our good and God’s glory; for he is as able, were it for the best, to secure us from the power of temptations, as to make a way for our escape from them, when we have felt sufficiently their power. Our gracious Redeemer, our faithful High Priest, was tempted in all points as we are. Yes, in *all points!* Think of that, thou tried and tempest-tossed child. There is not a point in which it is possible for thee to feel the tempter’s power, but what the blessed Savior has felt in his own person, when here in the flesh, and he therefore knoweth how to succor thee when thou art tempted. In all thy affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved thee: in his love and in his pity he redeemed thee, and he carried thee, and bore thee all the days of old.

4th. The text assures us that neither the world, the flesh or the devil, has power to tempt a child of God only by the permission of God himself. The exact amount of our temptations, their number, weight, measure, severity and duration, are dependent on his permission. God’s government extends to devils as well as to men, to sin as well as holiness, and none can go beyond the limits which his decree has fixed, to annoy or tempt his children.

“Pains and death around thee fly;
Till he bids thou canst not die;
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit.”

Neither tribulation, nor distress, nor angels, nor life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because they lack the disposition to do so, but because the God of unbounded power, love and wisdom, will not suffer it. God will indeed, and does suffer his children to be tempted, but not to an unlimited extent. Satan went as far in tempting Job as God would suffer him, but he could go no further. He had no power to drown even the swine, without the express permission of our Lord. A sparrow cannot fall, nor even a hair of our head, without an order from the throne of God.

Our text also suggests to our minds the order and exact equality of God’s ways. When he issues the permissive order for a saint to be tempted, he metes out the exact amount of grace required to sustain that saint, and bear him safely through the trial. The tempter cannot be in advance of God’s faithful providence; with the temptation, the way of escape is made. Pharaoh with all his mighty army could by no possibility reach the encampment of Israel at the Red Sea before the

Lord was there in his cloud to make a way for their escape across the channel of the deep. The three Hebrews could not be cast into the burning furnace until the form of the fourth, whose form was like the Son of God, was there to protect them and make a way for their escape, nor could Daniel reach the bottom of the den until God's angel had been sent to shut the mouths of the lions. God is never behind time in the protection of his children; he will help Zion, and that right early.

6th. On these glorious promises the apostle predicates the admonition, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." Why should we bow to any other god, or look to men, or angels, or to our own wisdom or works for protection or deliverance, and thus depart from the Lord our God? To distrust him, is in itself idolatry. Let us own no other god, trust in no other power or wisdom, but rely alone on his faithfulness.

7th. Patience, in tribulation, is taught. Our Father and our God is at the helm. Though fiercely beats the storm, the tempest, though our foundering bark begins to sink, though the surging billows roll, and all the elements be fearfully charged with flashing thunder bolts of wrath, what of all this? Can nature lashed to fury transcend his power, or go beyond his firm decree? He who taketh up the islands as a very little thing, who toucheth the mountains and they smoke, rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency upon the sky,

"He that can dash whole worlds to death,
Or make them when he please;
He speaks, and his almighty breath
Fulfills his great decrees."

"Then let the loudest storms arise,
Let tempests mingle earth and skies;
No fatal shipwreck need we fear,
But all our treasures with us bear."

Then count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, for they are appointed for good, and when sufficiently tried, all the dear, tried saints shall come forth from the furnace, like gold seven times tried in the fire; and remember that although sorrow may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.

Middletown, N. Y.
June 15, 1857.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 3
Pages 461 – 464



I CORINTHIANS 15:5

“And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.”

A friend has desired us to explain how Christ was seen of the twelve, after his resurrection, seeing that the time which seems to be referred to was after the apostasy of Judas, and before Matthias or Paul were numbered with the apostles. We have had very little reflection on this subject; nor does it appear to us to be a matter of much importance, any farther than it may involve the accuracy of the apostle’s statement in chronicling a matter of history. The vitally important fact of the resurrection of the crucified body of Christ from the dead was what the apostle was laboring to establish beyond all reasonable controversy, by testimony of the most convincing kind. Peter, who is called Cephas, had actually seen him in his resurrected body from his crucifixion, and after that he appeared to the disciples on the evening of the first day, and again after eight days, when Thomas was present. But at that time the literal number of the apostles present was eleven. Still we know that the apostles were very frequently called, *The Twelve*, as a name by which the apostles were designated from other disciples. Whether Paul here used the word *twelve* as a *proper noun*, or name, signifying, *The Apostles* without reference to the number literally which were then and there present, or not, is of no very great importance to us, seeing that we know that subsequently to the time referred to when Cephas first saw him, after his resurrection, he was really seen by all the apostles, including Paul himself; as he says in the eighth verse, “And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” Hence, all the twelve apostles were qualified as competent witnesses, for they all had ocular demonstration that he was risen indeed. As the great theme of their preaching was Christ and the resurrection, they were to speak that which they knew to be true, and to testify that which they had seen; so that every one of them had a personal knowledge of his resurrection, as they all had seen him from his resurrection, in his risen body. And although Paul was as one born out of due time, yet not too late to see the risen Redeemer.

Middletown, N.Y.,
June 1, 1862.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 5
Pages 200-201



I CORINTHIANS 15:24-28

(Reply to Sister Brown)

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that

he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

This argument is used by the inspired apostle in proof of the doctrine of the final resurrection of the saints. Until the resurrection of the saints, death holds dominion over their mortal bodies. Death reigned from Adam to Moses and continues to reign, and is the last enemy that shall be destroyed. When Adam followed his wife into the transgression, by his offence sin entered into the world and death by sin. And death passed, at that early period, upon all men, for all had sinned, as all were in Adam, and all were Adam, for the Lord God called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. (Gen. 5:2) Before Adam was multiplied, before Eve was revealed from his side, before son or daughter was born, in the day of creation God called their name Adam; and their name, so far as their earthly existence is concerned, is still Adam. Therefore death still reigns by one Adam, and all things cannot be put under Christ, in the sense of this text, until death is destroyed, subdued, and put under him by the resurrection.

Hence Christ, by his spirit which inspired the prophets, said of his people, “I will ransom them from death: O death, I will be thy plague, O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.” (Hos. 13:14) Again it is testified of him by the same spirit, “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces;” etc. (Isa. 25:8) And this Mediatorial triumph of the Son of God cannot be fully consummated while death holds dominion over the bodies of those whom he has ransomed from the power of the grave. And as his Mediatorial reign by the irrevocable decree of God, even the Father, is immutably extended, “Till he hath put all things under him;” so the final resurrection of all the saints is most conclusively demonstrated, and a denial of the resurrection of the bodies of the saints is regarded by the apostle as equivalent to a denial of the Mediatorial conquest and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has already ransomed them from the power of the grave, having paid the ransom price, and he holds that power in his own hands, as he said to John, “Fear not: I am the First and Last: I am he that liveth, and was dead: and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.” (Rev. 1:17,18) Having the keys of death and the grave he has the power to open, and none can shut; to shut, and none can open. Thus the apostle has shown that the resurrection of the saints at the last day is indispensable to the complete triumph of the Son of God, and that his triumph shall be consummated and his Mediatorial work finished when death, which is the last enemy, shall be subdued by the resurrection of the bodies of his saints. “For whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” He is the firstborn from the dead, the first fruits of them that slept; and God “hath begotten us [the saints] again, to a lively [or a vital] hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,” etc. (I Peter 1:3,4) “But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom. 8:11)

“Then cometh the end.” The end of what? The end which Jehovah declared from the beginning, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” (Isa. 66:10) The full and complete accomplishment of the Mediatorial work of our Redeemer cometh to an end; the design of God; for the word is used in scripture to signify God’s purpose or design. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord.” (James 5:11) The end also of all the trials,

tribulations and tears of the saints. The end of their sighing, sorrowing, and sinning; the end of all their association with corruption, depravity and earth. But above all, in the immediate sense of this subject, the finishing stroke of his Mediatorial work which was given him to do. He has himself declared, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:37,44) Then the resurrection of that the Father gave him - that the Father hath drawn to him - shall be the consummation of his Mediatorial work.

"When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." His mediatorial commission embraced the redemption of his people out of all the families of the earth unto God, and he has redeemed them unto God with his blood; but he was also commissioned to bring him "many sons unto glory." (Heb. 2:10) To wash, cleanse, sanctify and purify them, and raise them up and present them in his own image before God, without spot or blemish, "according as God has chosen them in him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love." As a kingdom that is fully organized; the King of Righteousness upon the throne, reigning in righteousness, sitting upon his holy hill Zion, with all his subjects, regenerated, initiated and recognized as his subjects; his law written in their hearts, his image indelibly enstamped on them, his spirit within them, and his glory bestowed upon them. In all the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ shall he deliver them up to God, even the Father.

"When he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." As Daniel described this kingdom, which the God of heaven has set up, as breaking in pieces all other kingdoms, and that it should survive them all and stand forever, so all other governments must terminate with the elements of nature, all things must be subdued to him, and even the rule of sin and reign of death, as well as all humanly organized governments must be abolished, and pass, before the kingdom shall be delivered to the Father. Even, "The last enemy shall be destroyed, which is death." How perfect and complete will be his victory; not a single enemy left living in the field, not a single fort or piece of artillery remaining to be used against the King or his subjects; all things subdued and put under his feet! This is virtually done already. "For he hath put all things under his feet." The word has gone from the mouth of God in righteousness, and shall not return void of that whereunto he hath sent it. All things, whether they be principalities or powers, thrones or dominions, things visible or invisible, all, all are put under him. Hell is subdued, death abolished, sin from all the saints annihilated, and Christ is triumphant over all things, with all the trophies of his deathless victory, in full command of earth and heaven, shall ascend and bear all his redeemed sons to the mansions of his Father's house prepared for them from the foundation of the world. And with divine authority shall he command the avenues of immortal glory. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah."(Psa. 24:7-10)

"Ye everlasting doors open wide,
Lift up, ye gates, receive my bride;
While heavenly harps proclaim aloud,
Here comes the purchase of my blood."

We now approach, with much fear and trembling, that part of our subject on which sister Brown more especially desires to be enlightened; which she supposes may be very plain and simple to us, but dark to her. On this very subject great and wise men have differed widely; and we presume there is not a subject in the wide range of divine revelation on which theologians have been so sensitive. In their discussions more angry passions have been stirred up than on any other point; and rivers of blood have been shed in the abominable controversies, and all without producing one spark of light, or making the least approximation toward a settlement of the points in dispute.

We will not attempt to settle or review the positions occupied by Trinitarians, Unitarians, Arians, Socinians and Seballians, or others who have distinguished themselves by their masterly efforts to secure the mastery; but simply give sister Brown and our readers generally the limited views which we have, making no pretension to infallibility, or even desiring that our views shall be regarded with the least favor, any farther than they shall be found clearly sustained by the infallible record which God has given of his Son.

We view the subject thus - First: That all the fulness of the Godhead is embodied in our Lord Jesus Christ. That there is not an attribute or perfection belonging to the Father, or to the Holy Ghost that does not belong to Christ. That in the absence of one such attribute or perfection, all the fulness of the Godhead would not so dwell in Christ. If he were not absolutely and to the fullest extent of the word God, we could not scripturally rely on him as our Saviour; for he has said, I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour. Nor could we worship him without involving the sin of idolatry; for he has said that he will have no other God before him, and has forbidden us to worship any other God. We therefore believe he is the true God and eternal Life; the only wise God our Saviour.

We believe that he is not only God in the most absolute sense of the word, but he also is the Man whose name is THE BRANCH, who shall be a priest upon his throne, etc., according to Zechariah 6:12,13; that he is the Man of God's right hand and the Son of Man, whose God has made strong for himself, according to Psalms 80:17.

And we also firmly believe that he is "The Mediator between God and men; the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time," according to I Timothy 2:5,6.

As God, he is one and identical with the Father, and embodies all the fulness of eternal Godhead. As the Man of God's right hand, and as he is called the Man Christ Jesus, and the Man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; he existed in this manhood with his Father from everlasting; not in a fleshly nature, until he came in the flesh, but in the perfect and complete manhood indicated in the declarations of scripture referred to; and which we clearly infer from the divine testimony that Man was created in his image and likeness, and that Adam is the figure of him that was to come. As the Man Christ Jesus, he embodied, and from everlasting did embody, his church, which is his body and the fulness of him that filleth all in all, according to Eph. 1:23. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." (I Cor. 12:12) "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourished and cherished it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:29,30,32) "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are all called in one hope of your

calling.” “And he gave some apostles,” etc. “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 and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:4,11,12,13) This one body, this perfect man, this full stature of the measure of Christ, refers to what we call the mystical stature, man or body, and in its full measurement presents Christ as the Head, and the church as his body, flesh and bones, and all the saints as members of this body, in this Christ, in this perfect Man, in this measured stature of the fulness of Christ, as we have seen that the church is his body, and the fulness of him that filleth all in all; that is, the church is the fulness of the stature, of the members, to set forth a perfect man.

That all these members which make up the fulness of the stature of Christ were in him before the foundation of the world is proved in Eph. 1:4, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” And that they were and are in him as the fullness of his body and members is equally clear from the whole tenor of Paul’s arguments throughout his epistle to the Ephesians. This is what we call eternal vital union of Christ and the church; and upon this union rests the eternal salvation of all who are or ever can be saved.

Now as we have proved from I Tim. 2:5, Christ is not only God and Man, but he is also the one and only Mediator between God and men. We do not controvert the testimony that Christ has come in the flesh; but we contend that he was Christ, or the Anointed One before he came in the flesh. That he was made of a woman, made flesh, and dwelt among us is clearly true, and that the fleshly body in which he came was made of the seed of David after the flesh, is equally true. In his flesh he took part of the same flesh that his members are partakers of is admitted; but that he was the Man Christ Jesus before he came in the flesh is what we contend earnestly for.

But as the one Mediator we are now to consider him. “Now a mediator is not the mediator of one, but God is one.” (Gal. 3:20) Where then is the other party? God is One, and the church is one. And Christ is the one and only Mediator between them, equally representing both parties; identified alike with both. He is one with the Father, in the Godhead, and one with the church as his body, and fulness of him. The fulness of the Godhead is in Christ, and Christ in all his eternal fulness is in the church. He is one with his body, the church, even as he and his Father are one. The head of the church is Christ, as the Head of Christ is God. Therefore as a Daysman he can lay his hands on both, and is every part perfectly qualified to mediate between the parties. As one in identity with the church, he could come in the flesh and be recognized by law and justice as the responsible head over all things to his church, and in the body of his flesh which he took on him for the suffering of death, could bear their sins in his own body on the cross. For them he could fulfill the law, perfectly obey all its precepts, bear its weighty penalty, put away effectually and for ever all the sins of that body, wash and cleanse and purify it in the fountain of his blood, and make peace by the blood of his cross, and thereby reconcile us unto God. While in his identity with his Father he could sustain all the honors of the eternal throne, and had power to lay down his life and to take it up again. His official titles as Prophet, Priest, and King, all belong to his Mediatorial relation to God and to the church.

Having thus defined our views of Christ as God, Man, and Mediator between God and men, we are better prepared to tell what is our understanding of the Son’s becoming subject to the Father. ‘Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.’ The Son in this place means the Mediator - the Head of the church, the body; and

when all the saints shall be conformed to the image of this Son, he will be still identified with them, as the First Born among many brethren; but will no longer be required to mediate between them and God. No man can come unto God but by him; but when he shall have delivered up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, the whole body or church of the First Born will be prepared to see without a glass between the full-orbed glory of the eternal Deity. The eternal deity of Christ will not be eclipsed, restricted, or abridged; for God will be all in all, while Christ as the First Born will bring all his members to his own standard of glory; for the glory which God has given him, he has given to them, and in his Godhead he will be glorified with the Father's own self, with the glory of uncreated and eternal deity, and all that Christ has assumed in his espousal of his church will continue to be identified with that church, to beautify and glorify her forevermore. The glorified humanity of the Son of God, though transcendently radiant, will be clearly distinguished from his own eternal Godhead. Now we approach and draw nigh unto God by the new and living way which he has consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; but the veil will then no longer intervene. With Job, we shall then see God, and our eyes shall behold him in his supreme excellency, while the Son, that is, in his members, his body, shall be subject to Him who has exalted them, and God will be all in all.

To imagine for a moment that the eternal deity of Christ, abstractly considered, could be placed in subordination to any higher power would be to doubt his absolute deity, or at least his equality with that higher power. But we know that Christ, in his Mediatorial identity, came into the world, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. This subordination to the Godhead is only apparent in his form of a servant which he took on him. But having accomplished the work which his Father gave him to do, he has sat down with his Father on the eternal throne. That same glory he had with the Father before the world began, and that glory he shall still have with the Father when the world shall be no more. We cannot divide the glory of Christ and the glory of the Father. They are one in the Godhead, and it is one undivided glory beaming forever from that one God who is all in all. But we feel our utter incompetency to dwell upon a subject so sublime and infinite, and better prepared to unite with the humbled poet and confess,

“With feeble light, and half obscure,
We mortals thy arrangements view;
Not knowing that the least are sure,
And the mysterious just and true.

My favored soul shall meekly learn
To lay her reason at thy throne;
Too weak thy secrets to discern -
I'll trust thee for my guide alone.”

Middletown, N.Y.
May 1, 1862.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 5
Pages 179-188

II CORINTHIANS II. 15, 16.

“For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?”

The term “savor,” signifies literally, anything that affects the organs of taste or smell; a sweet savor, is that which has a pleasant odor or taste. The incense and perfumed offerings which were made under the law, were to signify such offerings as are acceptable to God, and things with which God is well pleased; and in this sense we understand it is used by the apostle in our text. In the preceding verse Paul says, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place: for we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ,” &c. As the members of Christ, as his apostles, standing in him, by whom the savor of his knowledge is made known in every place, the apostles, their gifts and labors in the gospel, are well pleasing to God, not only in the effect produced on them that are saved, but also on them that perish. In drawing the line between the living and the dead, in feeding, comforting and building up the saints, and in exposing the hidden things of dishonesty, they draw down on themselves the wrath and persecution of the enemies of God and truth. So that in every place where they were called to labor, whether men would hear or forbear to hear, whether sinners were converted to God, or enraged by the testimony, in all cases God caused them to triumph, or made their ministry effectual, either by bringing to light those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, or in exposing those who were those who were of the opposite character; in no cases were their labors in vain in the Lord. “We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ.” There was nothing in even the apostles, which was well pleasing unto God but what was of Christ. They, in themselves, were by nature children of wrath even as others, hence all that they possessed as the children of God, disciples of Christ, or apostles of the Lamb, was of Christ, and the savor of that treasure which was committed to them, as unto earthen vessels, was a savor of Christ unto God. Their election, their calling, their qualifications for the ministry, and their administrations, were acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ.

“*To the one we are the savor of death unto death.*” That is to the one class, for they are presented in our subject as two classes, them that are saved, and them that perish. To the latter class, the apostle says we are the savor of life unto life. But how are we to understand this declaration? Does he mean that the preaching of the gospel is to them who perish the cause of their damnation, or of their perishing? That the gospel proposes to them terms, conditions, and proffers, and their rejection of them, or failure to comply with them, is the cause of their eternal death? Certainly not, for such is not the truth. Neither the gospel itself, nor the preaching of the gospel, can possibly injure any one. The gospel has no more power to damn, than the law has to justify and save. Condemnation and wrath is by the law, justification and immortality is by the gospel. The law is the administration of death, but the gospel administers life only to them that are saved, for those unto whom this life is administered cannot perish. Christ has said, I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hands. How then, are these apostles the savor of death unto death in them that perish? We understand the matter thus. To them that are dead in trespasses and sins, the preaching of the gospel only comes in the letter, or external sound of it; it falls upon their deaf ears as a dead letter; it has no life in it to them, inasmuch as they being dead, cannot receive it in its spirit and life. Take a bird from the

open air, and confine it in water, as its nature is not adapted to the water, this element is death to the bird, but it is life to the fish. But the water, although adapted to the nature of the living fish, can administer no life to the dead fish. So the preaching of the apostles was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. The word can only come to the dead, in the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness of the Spirit. To them it comes in word only, not in power, or in the Holy Ghost, or in much assurance, as it comes to quickened sinners; to them, Christ who is the substance of the gospel, is as a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness, and they have no desire for a knowledge of his ways, and the preaching of the cross is to them foolishness. It being spiritual, and they being carnal, they cannot comprehend it, they cannot feast upon it, nor can they derive vitality from it until they are quickened by the Spirit, and born of God; for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.

But to the other, that is to the living children of God, who possess life, the gospel is the power of God and the wisdom of God, it has life and comfort in it to cheer, sustain and animate that life that is in them. It is death to their carnal nature, to their outward man which perishes it has no life; but the inward man is by it renewed day by day. Every Christian must know in his own experience, that the gospel is full of life, joy and consolation to them, for they live upon it; it is Christ, and him crucified, and it is therefore the bread of heaven unto them. When the apostles and primitive ministers of the word were preaching, in all the examples recorded in the New Testament, there were some who gladly received the word, who fed upon it, and there were others who had no relish for it, who could not receive it, and who resisted and blasphemed. They preached Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, it was Christ, (and therefore life, for Christ is the Life) the power of God, and the wisdom of God. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us what are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Not them which do not believe, it is death to them, but the sheep of Christ, and they hear his voice, and they know his voice; but a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.

"And who is sufficient for these things?" Who is sufficient to discriminate between the living and the dead, between them that are saved, and them that perish? Who is sufficient to pour forth into the hearts of God's living children the streams of that river that makes glad the city of our God, to warm, revive, comfort and refresh them, while in their pilgrimage, and to bear the reproach, persecution, rage and violence of those unto whom the preaching of the word is foolishness? Those, and those only, whom God sustains, whom he causeth to triumph in Christ, as he did the apostles, are sufficient for the work whereunto the Holy Ghost has called them. Through him they can feed the flock of God, over the which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers, and through their God they can rush through a troop, and leap over a wall. But no part of the excellency of the power of the gospel is of them; it is of God, it is a sweet savor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved. The very fact that the gospel as preached by them does not feed, comfort or build up the unregenerate, that it is death unto death unto them that perish, is as irrefragable testimony that they are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, as when they are the

messengers of joy and comfort to them that are saved. For the preaching of the cross, if preached in its purity, is just as sure to be foolishness to the ungodly, as it is to be the wisdom of God to them that are saved.

Middletown, N.Y.
June 15, 1855

Elder Gilbert Beebe



II CORINTHIANS III. 7,8.

“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?” – 2 Cor. iii. 7,8.

WE have been requested to give our understanding of this text; and such light as we have we freely offer; not however as an oracle for others, but earnestly desiring that those who read may carefully and prayerfully compare what we say with the unerring and infallible standard of truth, and subscribe to our views only so far as they shall find them established by the word and Spirit of our Lord.

In the subject on which our comment is desired, the apostle is contrasting the distinct ministrations of death and life, of letter and spirit, of law and gospel, and while he presents himself as a minister of Christ, an apostle of the Lamb, he would have his brethren understand that he is not like Moses, a minister of the law. Under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, this apostle labored much to draw the line of distinction clearly between the two dispensations, the two covenants, and to combat that propensity which he found even among the children of God, to confound them together.

In writing to this church he saw no necessity for an introductory letter or epistle of commendation, as he could claim the members of this church as witnesses. Their very existence as a gospel church presented an incontestable demonstration of his doctrine and of his calling of God; not that Paul could claim them as his workmanship, or that their conversion to christianity was the result of his labor, but rather that his credentials as an apostle were written by the same Spirit in the heart of every child of God. He could refer them to the work of the Spirit on their hearts, which they had experienced, to witness the truth of his doctrine. And here permit us to say, Paul has introduced a rule to be observed by all the churches of Christ, and by all the children of God, for trying those who profess to be the ministers of the word. Their testimony, if it be the truth of God, will be in perfect harmony with what the Holy Ghost has said in the

scriptures, and what he has indelibly written in their hearts, in their experiences. And what the here says upon the subject of the ministrations, is confirmed by the manifest handwriting of the Holy Ghost upon their hearts.

By the ministration of death, we must understand the Sinai law, as that law or covenant only was written and engraved in tables of stones, and it was only when Moses descended from Mount Sinai with that law that his face shone so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold him. Although the whole administration of Moses, including the ministration of death, yet, as only the covenant of the ten commandments were written upon the tables, we must consider that covenant as being especially intended in the text. While thousands of Gentiles as well as Israelites are looking to that law for life, and vainly hope to be justified before God by their obedience to its precepts, the apostle declares it to be the minister of death. "For if," says he, "a law had been given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." And again, he informs us that by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified. The object and design of the law was not to give life, nor to open up a way by which guilty sinners could save themselves, but rather that every mouth might be stopped, and the whole world appear guilty before God. The exhibition of a perfect standard, shows the exceeding sinfulness of sin. But still there was a glory in that ministration, as illustrated by the lustre of the face of Moses, for as Moses was designed to personate that law, so the insufferable brightness of his countenance was to show that the law of God possessed a glory which depraved sinners can neither comprehend nor attain unto. The glory of that covenant was indicated by the awful display of the majesty of God upon the Mount. The cloud was upon the mountain, emblematic of the dark prospect which is before the soul that looks to the law for life. The life of God is hidden from mortal scrutiny when Moses or the law is read, as God himself was hidden from the eyes of the children of Israel by the cloud which covered the mountain. And the thunderings, and lightnings, the trumpet and the voice of words which Israel could not endure, and which made Moses himself to fear and quake, was well calculated to show the peculiar nature and glory of the law in its application to an awakened or quickened sinner. That ministration was glorious in its exhibition of the justice of God in his demands, and in the execution of wrath, notwithstanding its weakness through the flesh to do those things which Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh to accomplish. All that law could do for transgressors was to administer death; and hence it is denominated the ministration of death. But the apostle contrasts the glory of this ministration with the gospel, or ministration of righteousness. There can be no doubt that the former was glorious, but he clearly demonstrates that the latter very far excels in glory.

First, as a covenant. The new covenant, as God himself promised, is a better one, embracing better promises, and made perfectly secure by a better surety. The new covenant was better than the old because it rested not on the conditional obedience of those whom it embraced, as did the old. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them,

saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” – Jer. xxxi. 31-34. Heb. viii. 8-12; and x. 16-18.

To a child of God who has in his own experience been brought to witness the perfection, majesty, righteousness and justice of the law of God, and afterwards felt the application of the new covenant, by the Spirit writing the law of love, joy, gratitude and praise in his inward parts, who has known the Spirit’s work in the administration of that circumcision which is not outward in the flesh, but inward, in the heart, and not in the letter, but in the spirit, and whose praise is not of men, but of God, there can be no arguments necessary to convince him of the superior glory of the new covenant over the glory of the old covenant. All the promises and provisions of the old were, “yea,” and “nay,” or, in other words, all depended on the faithful performance of the things which it enjoined, demanding everything of the poor, distressed, bankrupt sinner, and furnishing him with nothing; cursing him for every offence or failure. But the new covenant provides everything unconditionally. It is not “yea,” and “nay,” but yea and amen. The sure mercies of David. The everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, sure in all things, abounding from first to last with Jehovah’s wills and shalls. Giving to the heirs of salvation the law in their hearts, and not on tables of stone that can be broken. Truly the apostle may say, If that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

Again. There is a difference in the glory of the two ministrations. The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth were brought by Jesus Christ. So great then as is the disparity between Moses and Christ, is that between the two covenants. One was a law of carnal commandments, the other is the power of an endless life. One adapted to the fleshly or carnal state of Israel, the other applicable only to the true, spiritual family of God. The one leading to bondage, having no power to set the captive free, the other is Jerusalem which is above, and which is free, and is the mother of all who, like Isaac, are the children of the promise. The old covenant was faulty. “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith; Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant.” &c.; and, “In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” – Heb. viii. 7,8 and 13. The glory of the first “was to be done away,” or superceded. In this sense we understand that the old covenant decayed, waxed old, and was, when Paul wrote to the Hebrews, ready to vanish away. The perfections of God, which were exhibited in the law, cannot change in themselves, but that law or covenant which cannot change in themselves, but that law or covenant which exhibited them in that form, was by its own limitation to continue only until he should come of whom it was written in the volume of the book, to do the will of God, and then he should take away the first and establish the second. Then should the sceptre depart from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet, and the reign of the Shiloh should be ushered in, with its surpassing glory. But the ministration of righteousness was to endure forever. In this new ministration, Christ and not Aaron occupies the priesthood. The glory of Aaron’s priesthood is superceded; Christ has become a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec. This change of the priesthood from the hands of the sons of Levi, to Christ, rendered a change of the law indispensable, for under the Levitical priesthood the people of Israel received the law, and there was in that priesthood a want of perfection. The offerings which were made under it could not take away sins. Its bleeding victims could only point to Christ, and their blood to his blood in the new testament, or new covenant, which was shed for many.

How then shall it be otherwise than that the ministration of the spirit shall excel the glory of that of wrath? The one administers condemnation and curses to as many as are under it, the other administers righteousness, not only commensurate to the law's demands, but everlasting righteousness, and eternal glory.

New Vernon, N.Y.,
October 15, 1846

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 2
Pages 690-695



II CORINTHIANS 5:21

Brother Beebe: Will you please give your views on II Corinthians 5:21. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." I am aware that you have many such requests from brethren and sisters; but I am so situated that I have no preaching except that comes to me in the "Signs of the Times." The "Signs," with my Bible and hymn book supply all I receive. There are no Old School Baptists within fifty miles of me, that I know of. Elder T. H. Owen is the nearest, and I have not seen him for eighteen months.

Yours as ever,
B. Newkirk.
Yola County, California.
April 11, 1866.

Reply: The apostle in the connection of this text is treating upon the subject of the complete redemption of the people of God from the curse and dominion of the law, the guilt and punishment of sin, by the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. That all for whom Christ died were sinners against God, transgressors of his righteous law, and, by nature, children of wrath even as others, is fully demonstrated; for if they were not sinners, no expiation of sin would be required on their behalf. This apostle informs us in Romans 4:24,25, that Jesus, the Lord, was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. And in our context, verses 14 and 15, he says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Our views on this subject, which we believe are warranted by the scriptures, are that the immaculate Son of God, who was delivered for our offenses, was holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens. He was a Lamb without spot or blemish, who knew no sin in his nature, or in his works. Shining in all the brightness of his Father's glory, he was the express image of the invisible God, and he was and is the Lord from heaven, and filled with all

the fullness of the Eternal Godhead. All the infinite perfections of the eternal deity were embodied in him. He was one with the Father, and he was in the Father, and the Father was in him. In his eternal identity with the Father he knew no sin. His will was and is the will of the Father, and that will is the supreme standard of holiness, according to which God worketh all things. On his unsullied purity and absolute holiness all holy beings love to contemplate; angels adore, saints extol, and devils tremble before him. If he had known sin, as attaching impurity to himself, it must have disqualified him for the great work of our redemption.

“For he that could for sins atone,
Must have no blemish of his own.”

All the victims required to be slain under the ceremonial law, and indeed all that were offered from the foundation of the world, as typical of Christ our sacrifice, including that of Abel, were required to be without blemish, to show that we, the church of God, are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish, as set forth from the foundation of the world, pointing to that one offering wherein he through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, and by which he hath obtained eternal redemption for us.

This holy and spotless Lamb was made sin for us! How? By himself coming under that law of which he was the author and superior, and which his members in their Adamic nature had transgressed. “When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his own Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them (his members) that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” In thus coming under the law he took on him the seed of Abraham. “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels,” (for angels were not in the nature of those to be redeemed, or to receive the adoption of children) “but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” That is, as explained by Paul to the Galatians, “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” In taking on him this seed, he took on him all their transgressions. “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:4-11).” Thus he was made sin, or, if we include the supplied words of our text, he was made to be

sin for us. He was not made to sin, or to do that which was sinful; but in taking on him our nature, he took on him our infirmities; was made like unto his brethren (Hebrews 2:17).

Much has been said and written in modern times of the immaculate conception of the Messiah, as though his design had been only to take on him the seed of Abraham, and not their sins. But the very object or design was to bear the sins of his people in his own body. Imbodied in the seed of Abraham, which body was prepared for him, with that seed he stood identified, as its life, and he was recognized by the law and justice of God, as being responsible for their sins. Should a capital offense be committed by a man's hand, would not the life of the body of which that hand is a member be held in law and justice for the offense? In the typical illustration of this sublime subject, the priest confessed the sins of Israel over the head of the scape goat, and it was said their sins were laid upon the head of the scape goat, and borne away. It is in this way we understand that Jesus was made sin for us. And he was made a curse for us, as it is written in the law, "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree." Mere substitution could not meet the demands of the law. To condemn and punish the innocent, or to justify the guilty, were alike forbidden by the law which Christ came to fulfill. Yet the head being identified with its body may be held for the transgressions of the body. The right of Christ to redeem his people, as the one nearest of kin to them, and holding, by virtue of higher claim, a right of property in the seed of Abraham, before they were partakers of flesh and blood, and before they had sinned, rests on their spiritual existence in him, anterior to their becoming partakers of flesh and blood; but his qualifications to redeem them with his blood required that he should take part of the same flesh and blood in which they had offended, that he might be recognized as being under the same law by which they were condemned. Hence he was made flesh and dwelt among them. With them identified as the head with its body; the life of the body was prepared for him. He was made sin. See him whom the heavens adored arraigned before the bar of justice, now in the form of sinful flesh, with all the iniquities of all his members found on him, not merely by imputation, as some suppose, but by actual identity of head and body.

He has taken on him that body, that seed, and in that body crushed with the mighty weight of all the sins, which with the body he assumed, the law with unabating fury pours on him the wrath that was due to the sins which were laid on him. An arbitrary act of imputation could not suffice. He is made sin, or made to be sin, *for us*. For whom? For the seed of Abraham: for his body, his bride, his sheep, his seed, his members, and for them only. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:3-4)." But we pass to consider the great purpose or design of this wonderful condescension and unparalleled humiliation of the Son of God.

We are told in the sacred word that God sent his Son to redeem them that were under the law, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; to save his people from their sins; to redeem them unto God. But justification as well as redemption is contemplated in our text. Merely the putting away their sins would not secure to them the righteousness of God. It could only restore to them their original innocence in which they stood in Adam before sin entered. Hence to make the redeemed seed the righteousness of God himself required that the same relationship should exist between Christ and his members which we have found to be indispensable for their redemption.

Theological speculators talk of justification before God in a variety of ways. Some look for justification by the deeds of the law, or by the righteousness of their own works. But God has informed us that in that way no flesh shall be justified in his sight. As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. Others speak of the righteousness which Christ wrought out by his active and passive obedience to the law. This was indispensable in our redemption from sin. "By the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous." And so far as legal righteousness is considered, it is secured by the obedience which Christ has rendered to all the jots and tittles of the holy law. This legal righteousness redeems and saves us from wrath and condemnation, but does it qualify us for communion with God, for fellowship with the Spirit, and for an inheritance with the saints in light? Our text contemplates a higher order of righteousness than the mere satisfaction rendered to the law for our transgressions. "That we might be made the righteousness of God." Much more than an acquittal from guilt and condemnation is required to bring us to God, and prepare us to stand before him in the perfection of his nature. God has told us by the mouth of Daniel that Christ should not only "finish transgression and make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity," but also "*bring in* everlasting righteousness." To work out is one thing, but to bring in is quite another. Without the former, the latter would be impossible. It was indispensably necessary that Christ should redeem us from sin, and death and hell; but having so redeemed us, it is no less indispensable that we be made the righteousness of God, and partakers of the divine nature. We are therefore assured that Christ is of God "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." This is the name wherewith he shall be called, "The Lord our righteousness." "For their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." So then as Christ was made to be sin for us, in the putting away of our sins, and as he was made sin by taking on him the seed of Abraham, so the seed of Abraham are made the righteousness of God in him who is the righteousness of God. Christ is our life, and he is the true God, and Eternal Life. We are in him, and he is in us, that all his members should be made perfect in one, that the world may know that God hath sent him, and that he hath loved us even as he hath loved him.

Middletown, N.Y.

July 1, 1866.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Editorials Volume 6

Pages 352-357



GODLY SORROW WORKETH REPENTANCE: II

CORINTHIANS 7:10

Brother Beebe: - As I have never troubled you much, will you give me your views on the words, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance," etc. What is it that repents, the new man or the old man, or

neither? Is the Christian constituted of three parts? The new man has nothing to repent of, and the old man will not.

J.M. West
Troy, N.Y.
July 20, 1867.

Reply: - A careful reading of the chapter and epistle which contains these words of the apostle will show that Paul addressed his instructions to the saints in their complexed character, as children of God but here in the flesh. As subjects only of a fleshly birth they could have known nothing of godly sorrow; for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, and sorrow to be godly must be a spiritual exercise. And as that life which is born of God cannot commit sin, it, when abstractly considered, has nothing to be sorry for, or to repent of. And we know of no third nature in what constitutes a Christian. In our natural birth we partake of a nature which we call human, which is depraved and by which we were children of wrath even as others. In our new birth, we are born of God, and made partakers of the divine nature. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever (I Peter 1:23)."

We cannot therefore apply these words either to the old man, abstractly from the new, nor to the new man, abstractly from the old; for in the absence of either, a Christian cannot be found on earth. The old man, before the new birth by which the new is born, can neither receive nor know the things of the Spirit of God, and when the new man shall be separated from the old, it will mingle only with the spirits of just men made perfect, and be found on earth no more. The apostle was not addressing his instructions to carnal, unquickened, ungodly men, nor to the glorified spirits of the departed saints; but to the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints which were at Achaia. These, in both epistles, he describes as being saints, born of God and yet in the flesh. The saints in the militant state of the church are always addressed in the Scriptures as subjects of two distinct births; one of the flesh, the other of the Spirit. The production of the first birth is flesh, and the production of the second, or new birth, is spirit. These two natures, which are called flesh and spirit, old man and new man, inner man and outer man, are contrary one to the other; and while both exist in every Christian, they never exist in harmony, but are in continual conflict one with the other. We know of no instance in the Scripture where the appellation is given either to the flesh or to the spirit separately considered. A Christian is then a person who has been born of the flesh, and afterward of the Spirit - a complex being, having both flesh and spirit. An old man which is corrupt with its deeds, and which he is admonished to put off, keep under, deny, etc.; and the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, and which is to be put on, followed and exhibited. The first verse of the chapter in which our text occurs, recognized in the people addressed the existence of both natures, in the admonition, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In this complex character the saints are addressed in this, and in all the admonitions given by the apostle. In either nature separately considered from the other, these admonitions would all be totally inapplicable. In this state and condition Christians and saints are subject to two kinds of sorrow; the one is called the sorrow of the world, such as is common to the world, and even to Christians while in the world, and which worketh death. Not the death of the new man, for that is eternal life, and can not die; but the death of that worldly nature which,

borne down with excessive sorrow, yields up the ghost. As expressed by our Savior when he said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." Crushed beneath the guilt of all our transgressions, his holy soul groaned in spirit and was sorrowful even to death. But his was godly sorrow, so far as he was personally the subject of it; but resulting from the sins and ungodliness of those for whom he bore it. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, carried our sorrows (Isaiah 53:4)." But the apostle is here speaking particularly of the two kinds of sorrow to which God's children are subject while here in the flesh. The sorrow to which our earthly nature is subject, occasioned by losses, crosses, bereavements, disappointments, diseases and pains, tend to bow us down with sorrow to the grave. But godly sorrow arising from a godly source differs from worldly sorrow, both in its nature and effects. As the one worketh death, the other develops the life of the spirit which is manifested by a godly walk and deportment. It was thus exemplified in the Corinthians. They had been made sorry by Paul's letter (his first epistle, in which he had reproved them for many disorders which existed among them); and the sorrow thus occasioned proved to be of a godly sort, for they sorrowed after a godly manner, so that it resulted in their profit, in producing repentance and deliverance from their disorder. Herein then is the *salvation*, or *deliverance*, to which godly sorrow tends. "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" Godly sorrow wrought *repentance*, or reformation, as described in the foregoing particulars. This repentance, or reformation, was wrought by godly sorrow. Godly sorrow is not *repentance*, as many suppose; for it is a spiritual exercise of a quickened child of God, which springing from the Spirit which dwells in the saints, makes them sorry for their faults; not from any sense of wrath or damnation, but because they love God, and loving him supremely they love holiness, and hate sin; it therefore works, or leads to repentance, as in the examples given by Paul. It is not the dread of retribution, but the love of God in the Christian's heart that leads to repentance. Because the Christian loves God and holiness, he is filled with sorrow for his faults, and that sorrow leads to reformation.

Now as to what part of the Christian repents, etc., we understand that this is said of the Christian as he is, and not to any particular part of him. It is true that the eternal life which is born of God cannot commit sin; because it is born of God; but the Christian is nevertheless subject to vanity, and liable to transgress the laws of Christ. And the law of sin which is in the members of the Christian may, and too often does, bring him into captivity to the law of sin and death. Not to everlasting death, but to that death of which the apostle speaks when he says, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." It is the Christian, as such, including his whole person, soul, body and spirit, that is required to conform to the law of Christ.

Middletown, N.Y.

October 1, 1867.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Editorials Volume 7

Pages 79-82

II CORINTHIANS XII. 2.

We understand the apostle to be speaking of a vision which he had received of the Lord, some fourteen years before he wrote this epistle. "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven." Although he speaks of the man, in the third person, yet by comparing this verse with the seventh verse, we perceive that he was speaking of what he had himself experienced. And this conclusion is in harmony with the theme of his subject in the preceding chapter. His inability to say whether he was in the body or not at the time of that memorable vision, not only gives us the idea of the perfect ecstasy of his mind, but also that it was a purely spiritual exercise, which we infer from his unconsciousness of being in or out of the body at the time. If in the body, the powers of nature were so perfectly subjected and subdued that he, for the time, felt none of its depravity, or opposition to the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, any more than the saints shall feel when perfectly liberated from the corruptions of the flesh.

Mark! He knew a man in Christ, not in Adam, for had this been a fleshly exercise, then it would have affected him as a member of the earthly Adam, but his life in Christ is not earthly nor carnal, but it is spiritual and heavenly, therefore while the new man, which is born of the Spirit, and which is spirit, enjoys the visions of eternal things, the darkness of our earthly nature comprehends them not. In his vision Paul was transported to the third heavens. By the third heavens, we understand the immediate presence of our God, or that state wherein the saints of God shall ultimately dwell. The church under the two covenants or testaments, are the first and second heaven, but the third heaven has reference to the place and condition of the church in her triumphant glory. The hope and faith of God's children looks to that which is within the veil, whither the forerunner has for us already entered. The glories of that highest heaven, which was disclosed in vision to the favored apostle of the Lamb, were beyond the power of finite beings to describe. The laws of language by which intelligent beings communicate with each other are inadequate, and utterly fail to fully describe that glory, and this is what we understand the apostle to mean when he says he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. God has reserved to himself the power to make these unspeakable things known to his children by his Spirit, and to secure this object he has withheld from man the power to express them, so as to make the subject clear or intelligible to the natural intellect of man. Here we have an immutable law, which governs all revelation of spiritual things. As no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him, even so, or exactly so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. And the apostle says we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which are freely given us of God, and which things are hidden from the wise and prudent; so that the natural man cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things; they have an unction from the Holy One, and they know all things.

Whether these remarks have touched the particular point on which our correspondent desired to be enlightened or not, we do not know; but such views as we have we freely give. And may we

remember the admonition to the saints: If any man lacketh wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth freely to all men, and upbraideth not.

Middletown, N.Y.
February 1, 1858.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 4
Pages 58 - 60



II CORINTHIANS 12:2-4

Reply to brother Ford's communication on page 29: The passage referred to reads thus: "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

We understand the apostle to be speaking of his own experience: that he himself was the man in Christ, who in vision was caught up to the third heaven, and saw and heard what mortal tongues cannot express nor human language describe. He had come to speak, in demonstration of the signs of his apostleship, of visions and revelations, having in the preceding chapters told them what he had been enabled to endure; and that out of all his conflicts and trials, God had delivered him. Now of visions he could speak understandingly, and from actual experience. The transporting vision of the heavenly world, and of the supreme glory of God, so far as Paul was able to describe it, was the same in kind, though superior in degree, to that enjoyed by all the children of God. We in our limited measure have the earnest of the Spirit given us, whereby we cry Aba Father, and there are times when our faith enters within the vail, and we are permitted to see and hear more than we have ability to express of the revelation of the glory of God to us. By the third heaven we understand Paul to mean that state in which all the saints shall ultimately be perfected, and dwell with Christ in the glory which he has with the Father. The first heaven refers to the state of the Old Testament saints, patriarchs, and prophets. The second, the gospel church in her militant conflicts, and the final consummation of the glory of the kingdom of Christ in heaven is the third and perfected state.

To taste of the joys of the world to come has been the happy privilege of the saints at times, but we presume that in confirmation of his calling to the apostleship, and to qualify him more fully for that position, Paul was favored with a more full vision of the glory of that heavenly state than what is enjoyed by others.

He says, and repeats, that he could not tell whether he was in the body, or out of the body at that transporting moment; and it is a remarkable truth, that in proportion to the degree of all our spiritual enjoyments is the forgetfulness, or unconsciousness of the body. When we are at home

in the body we are absent from the Lord. “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:6-8).” The more we think about ourselves, our personal interest, and our individual marks of personal safety, the more prone are we to the fleshly reasonings of our poor blind and selfish minds, and the more we reason, the darker all appears. For God has ordained that his saints shall walk by faith, and not by sight. But when our faith mounts up to heaven, pierces through, and looks beyond the veil, and beholds the uncreated glories of the God of our salvation, then, whether we sink or swim, live or die, are saved or lost, is not in our mind; all that care is left with him who careth for us. Enraptured, transported with joy unspeakable and full of glory, we become perfectly unconscious of where the body is. That is a matter of so very little consequence, compared with what our faith sees and hears of unspeakable things, it cannot then intrude. The things which Paul heard he says it was *unlawful* for a man to utter. The law of language makes no provision for such utterances; for these things are unutterable. The margin reads “not *possible*.” There is no law or governing principle, in the law of language that will permit them to utter things which are so unspeakable and full of glory. But could we be always thus transported, we should be exalted above measure; beyond that measure of ecstasy which God in infinite wisdom has appointed for us while here in the flesh. It would unfit us for the duties of life, and for usefulness in our day and generation. But our God takes care that we rise not above that measure to which we are restricted, and provides for us a counterpoise; a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet us. Our fleshly nature is formed of the dust of the ground, which is groaning under the curse; and it is doomed to bring forth thorns, and briars, to pierce and entangle us. If we never felt them piercing us, we should be very apt, like Paul, when in his vision, to forget that we were still in the body. But when they prick and tear our flesh, we groan within ourselves, and ask, “Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?” In an experience of more than half a century, the most spiritual frame of mind and most transporting joys we have ever experienced, have been when we were thinking little or nothing about ourself. All our doubts, fears, unbelief, fretfulness, and impatience is about darling self. May we then look away from self, and look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and learn to press toward the mark of the prize of our high calling; and leave all our cares with him who has promised to raise us up in his image at the last day. Be this our care, that we glorify him in our body and in our spirit, which are his.

Middletown, N.Y.
February 15, 1867.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 6
Pages 450 - 452



II CORINTHIANS XIII. 5.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

This important admonition is to the saints generally, as well as to the church at Corinth, unto which it was originally addressed. All the saints feel more or less inclined to examine themselves in regard to their hope, their experience, and the reality of their interest in the cleansing blood and justifying righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ; and in this self-examination they are generally led to review their first religious exercises, what they experienced in their translation from darkness into the light, liberty and joy of the gospel; and this is right, and has often served to renew their strength and confidence in the assurance that what they have experienced was certainly the work of God. But it is also important that we should have the witness that we are in the faith, as well as in hope of the gospel. For now abideth faith, hope and charity, &c. So far as faith is considered a vital principle, or fruit of the Spirit, we cannot entertain a genuine gospel hope in its absence, for both faith and hope are the fruits of that same Spirit which is born of God. But we presume the apostle in this admonition has reference to the doctrine or principles of the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and for which they are commanded to contend earnestly. As these disciples possessed Christ in them, they could not possibly be destitute of the grace of faith; but from the many severe reproofs which he dealt out to them in both epistles, it appears evident that they were faulty in regard to the doctrine of faith and the practice corresponding thereto. It is equally certain that God's dear children in the present day are liable to fall into the same faults, or faults equally incompatible with the high vocation wherewith they are called of the Lord. The term faith is often used by Paul to signify the gospel, in distinction from the law, or legal dispensation. For the law is not of faith; but the gospel is a dispensation of promises and provisions of grace and salvation, which, in order for us to enjoy, we must have faith to lay hold of them. Thus, “By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.” It is altogether opposed to the doctrine of salvation by works, for the apostle says it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. - Rom. iv. 16. Paul had told the Corinthians of some who concerning the faith had made shipwreck, and others whose heresy in denying the resurrection of the dead had overturned the faith of some. The grace of faith cannot be wrecked nor overturned, for it is the faith of Jesus Christ, and it overcomes the world; but in regard to the doctrine of the gospel, as a system purely of grace, the saints are liable to depart, at least to some extent from it, and thereby suffer loss. How important then, that they should examine themselves in regard to what they hold or countenance as the doctrine of Christ. In this self-examination they require a more reliable standard to judge by than the decisions of learned doctors of divinity, creeds or commentaries written by uninspired men. Each of the members of Christ being personally interested for himself in the matter, instead of submitting to the judgment of another, must himself make the examination in the fear of God. We, as Old School Baptists, hold that the last will and testament of our Lord Jesus Christ is the divinely authorized standard of our faith. Whatever we believe religiously, or in regard to the gospel, must be tested by what is written in the New Testament. However popular or palatable a sentiment may be, if it is not sustained by that standard, it is to be rejected. Whatever that standard sustains, however unpopular and unpalatable to the flesh, must be regarded as the faith of God's elect - the faith

which was once delivered to the saints, and the faith for which the saints are required to contend earnestly.

The Spirit also which God has implanted in his saints, searches all things, even the deep things of God, and is also a witness in point to establish the fact of our being in the faith; but we must try the spirits, because many false prophets have gone out in the world. If the spirit we possess be of God, it will perfectly accord with the testimony of the Scriptures, and thus afford us two witnesses, by which every word shall be established; and by these two witnesses, the word and the Spirit, we shall be able to prove our own selves, whether we be in the faith. Having this proof we have nothing to fear on the subject of our orthodoxy, or soundness in the faith.

Frames and feelings are a very unsafe guide, and carnal reason is still more treacherous and unreliable in the matter of self-examination. Our feelings are always varying, and carnal reason is blind, neither should be trusted to decide our faith or hope in God, but the word and Spirit of our God is immutable. The natural man may read the letter of the Scripture, but he cannot perceive its spirituality, because it is spiritually discerned. The spirit which Christ has given to his saints is the “Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye [the disciples of Christ] know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” - John xiv. 17.

“Know ye not your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” A reprobate is one that is rejected. And this faith in which the christian church stands, rejects all in whom Jesus Christ is not; for “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Manifestly none are known to the faith or fellowship of the saints until they can give evidence that they are born of the Spirit, for all such, and none but such, have Christ in them the hope of glory, all others are rejected, or reprobates. But what an astonishing revelation is this that the saints know, that Jesus Christ is in them. He whom the boundless heavens adore, the Son of God, the Lord from heaven, the Resurrection and the Life, the only and blessed Potentate, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, dwells in all his children, and gives them the evidence that he has taken his abode in them. This above all things is worth knowing. And hence the necessity of the self-examination enjoined by the apostle. Ascertaining by divinely approved testimony, that we are in the faith, and that our faith and hope are in God, we have the assurance, yea the knowledge, that Jesus Christ is in us, and that we are in him, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. To secure us from error, from heresy and from imposition, we should pursue the examination in the light of the unerring standard, and having the assurance that our faith is sustained by the standard of divine revelation, we not only enjoy the consolation of the assurance our own selves, but are thereby qualified to minister consolation to those who with us are of the household of faith, as well as by our walk and conversation as by speaking to them of the glory of our Redeemer’s kingdom, and talking of his power.

Middletown, N. Y.
June 1, 1857.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 3
Pages 458-461