

Gilbert Beebe

Prayer

Few subjects, perhaps, have occasioned greater concern in the minds of the children of God than that of prayer; and it is indeed, when rightly understood, a comforting thought that the living children of God are more seriously tried upon this subject than any other people. Indeed, we do not know that any other people have any trouble at all in regard to prayer. The Pharisee who stood and prayed with himself, and paraded before the Lord what he evidently regarded as his own good works and self-esteem, had not a single petition to ask of God, and being full of self-righteousness, betrayed no doubt or fear that his prayer was meritorious in the sight of God. The parable of the Pharisee and Publican was spoken by our Lord unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, {Luke xviii. 9-14,} and it is applicable to all self-righteous Pharisees, whether of ancient or modern times. The ease and fluency in which all self-righteous persons can read or recite what they call their prayers, is very observable. They profess to regard it as a duty to do a certain amount of praying; and when they have read or repeated their task, they can say, with the strange woman described in Proverbs vii. 14, "I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows." Of this class of will-worshippers, not a few are like their ancient brethren, fond of being heard in their devotions; they choose the corners of streets, or market places, or places where they may be heard of men, that all may see how devout and righteous they are. They think, as we are told, that they shall be heard for their much speaking, and therefore make long prayers, and use vain repetitions; but our Lord has said of them, "this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me; but in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." {Matt. xv. 8,9} --- It is not then the fluency of speech, the eloquence of language, nor readiness to engage in public or in private prayer, that God will accept as worship. Nor is it a periodical appropriation of times in which to go through the form of prayer, for the spirit of grace and supplication are not at our command. In his sermon on the mount, our Savior forbid his disciples praying as the hypocrites do, or using vain repetitions, as the heathen do. "Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Even the repetition of the form of prayer which Jesus taught his disciples, {Matt. vi. 9-13,} becomes with us vain and forbidden repetition when we are not led by the Spirit to pray with the spirit and with the understanding. How many of us have been taught from our infancy to commit to memory what is called the Lord's prayer, and to repeat it, as though by so doing we could secure the mercy and protection of the Lord. It is used as a kind of charm, to keep evil from us when we lie down to sleep, and we have felt as though we have secured the favor of the Lord; when not a word has been felt in or uttered from our heart. Even the saints of God, including the apostles of the Lamb, have asked in prayer of God and received not, because they have asked amiss. We may rest assured that we have asked amiss, if God withhold from us that which we ask for; and this is a great mercy to us, that he does withhold those things which his Spirit has not made intercession for. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself

maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." {Rom. viii. 26,27} Our Savior said to the woman of Samaria, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." {John iv. 24} --- The experience of the saints is in harmony with the last two references, especially when they feel their heart drawn out in prayer to God. When they remember that God is a Spirit, infinite and eternal, the inquiry from their heart arises, "wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High God?" {Micah vi. 6} They know they cannot approach him with a price in their hand, or with any offerings they can bring. How often in their heart, the unuttered and unutterable desire is hidden, "O that I knew where I might find him!" They may bend their knees to the ground, but their lips are sealed; they perhaps cannot utter a word, a syllable, and they sometimes even fear that they have offended God by their very attempt to pray. How sensibly do they now feel their weakness, and in deep humility they groan in spirit, in inexpressible breathings of desire. This is prayer, and this prayer enters the ears of the God of Sabaoth. And this prayer God has promised to hear, for he has said, "when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." {Isa. xli. 17} This is truly helping their infirmity. Their tongue has failed; it can utter no sound, it cannot express the deeply hidden groaning for the water of life which is felt within. No created ear can hear the silent emotions that rend their broken hearts; the deep contrition that overwhelms them in unspeakable anguish can be heard only by their gracious prayer hearing God. "I the Lord will hear them." What heavenly consolation is found in these gracious words. The heavens had seemed to them like brass, and the earth as dust, and their prayers had seemed utterly unavailing, and shut out from the ear of Sovereign Mercy. A consciousness not only of infirmity, but also a sense of guilt and unworthiness had paralyzed their tongue; but their inability to articulate with their tongue cannot prevent him, who searches the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men, from hearing the prayer which his own Spirit has indited in the heart, and no other prayer than that which his Spirit indites will be accepted, though uttered in thunder-tones. "For we know not how to pray as we ought," nor can we learn from all the prayer books ever published, or by any lessons taught by good or bad men. It is only the Spirit that can search or know what is the mind of God, or make intercession for the saints according to the will of God. The spirit of our flesh would ask that God would yield to our carnal desires; but the Spirit of God teaches us to say, "not our will, but thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," and to ask for grace to reconcile us in all things to God. --- The Spirit of our God will never lead to pray for or desire that God should grant us anything more or less than what he has in store for us; and when we pray for the gratification of our carnal desires, we surely pray amiss, and it will neither be for our good or his glory, and therefore he graciously denies our requests. The saints are instructed to pray without ceasing, and in all things to give thanks. We do not understand this injunction to mean that all our time is to be devoted exclusively to a form of prayer, for vain repetitions in prayer are forbidden; but at all times in our heart to breathe forth our desire to God to preserve us from evil, and lead us by his counsel and wisdom in all things. There is no place or period of our pilgrimage when we can say our prayers are ended, or that we can cease to call upon the name of the Lord. And in all things, whether agreeable or painful to us, we are to give thanks to God. --- The peculiar trials which are experienced by God's praying children, when their prayers

seem to be unheard, and they feel as though they were sinking in deep waters of sore affliction, should not lead them to conclude that God's ear has become heavy that he cannot or will not hear them; for he often withholds the answer to our prayers for the trial of our faith and patience, and that we may the better understand and more fully appreciate the blessings when received. Our blessed Lord spake a parable of the unjust judge and importuning widow, "to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." {Luke xviii. 1-5} A sense of our abject poverty and utter unworthiness should not cause us to faint, or despair of the mercy of the Lord, for it is the poor, humble, contrite, laboring, heavy laden child that God has made welcome to come boldly to his throne of grace in their Redeemer's Name; and the promise is that they shall obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need; but the rich, self-righteous, he sends empty away. The poor publican, bowed down under a sense of unworthiness to even raise his eyes to heaven, in deep contrition smites upon his breast, and the hidden anguish of his heart in trembling accents cries, "God, be merciful to me;" and to this last petition he signs his name and character, "a sinner." He does not claim to be a saint, nor indulge a thought that his sad prayer is meritorious. If God shuts out his prayer, and spurns him from his presence, he feels in his heart that God is just. But with fear and trembling he feels that this is his last, his only hope; for if God withholds from him his mercy, he sinks in hopeless despair. But O, what wondrous grace! His prayer is heard, and he is justified rather than the boasting Pharisee. - -- There are times with some who have hoped in the Lord, when they have had so deep a sense of the infinite majesty and holiness of God, and so deep a sense of their own pollution, as, like the publican, to stand afar off, and because they dare not to lift up their eyes to heaven, or take the sacred name of God upon their lips, have concluded that they have not, cannot pray; when perhaps in no part of their experience have they in reality and truth prayed more, or with greater acceptance. Their prayers have not been formed into words, nor articulated with their voice, but from the deepest recesses of their aching heart the pent up ejaculation has in unutterable groanings, in heaving sighs and flowing tears, expressed the desire and confession, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." --- The subject of prayer opens before us a boundless theme for serious reflection. The God to whom prayer is to be made is the "high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, and his name is Holy." He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." Yet in the amazing riches of his grace he has provided a way of access through Jesus Christ, the one and only Mediator between God and men, whereby his children may approach him, and come even unto his seat, and not be consumed. Most truly, Jesus Christ is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, and no man can come unto the Father but by him. {John xiv. 6} Our prayers to be acceptable to God must be presented in his name, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must or can be saved; and he has instructed us to address all our prayers to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ the Son, and as indited by the Holy Spirit. This rule should be strictly observed when we approach the throne of grace. It is true that these three are One, but officially to be regarded in our prayers, as Jesus has commanded us. By the Spirit we address the eternal God, as "our Father which is in heaven," whose name is hallowed; and we find access to him through his Son, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, whom the Father has given to be the Head over all to the church, which is his body, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all; and in whose sacred Sonship is treasured the sonship, heirship, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, with every other spiritual blessing of all his members, and

their eternal, vital union is securely treasured up in Him. Therefore when we pray we should ask our petitions of the Father in his name, as taught by his Holy Spirit. Thus the "Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," are recognized in our spiritual devotion. While we call upon God, as our Father, this relationship is in and through Jesus Christ his Son, who by the gift of the Father is our Head, and officially our Mediator, in whom alone we stand accepted. The Holy Spirit which is given us, while one with the Father and the Son, is officially our Comforter, our Teacher, and the gracious, infallible Prompter of our prayers. Every prayer, therefore, to be acceptable to God, must be addressed to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ our Mediator; for in no other name or way can we have access unto God. The new and living way unto the Father, which is consecrated for us, is through the veil; that is to say, through the flesh of him who was made flesh and dwelt among us; whose glory we beheld, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. How frequently Jesus informed his disciples that after his resurrection and ascension to his Mediatorial throne, they should address all their prayers to the Father in his name, "and in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." {John xvi. 23, 24} "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." {John xiv. 12-14} The privilege of asking in his name belongs exclusively to those who are embraced in his name; as all the members of a man's body are included in his name, and as a wife is in the name of her husband, and as children are legally included in the name of their paternal parents, so the church of God, as the Lamb's wife, and all her members, are members of his body, and covered by his name; and as his seed, or children, his name is their inheritance, and their approach unto God in his name implies a vital relationship to him; and his name is to them a strong tower, and perfect indemnity for all they need for time or for eternity. And the Holy Comforter shall lead them into all truth; for he shall take of the things of Jesus and show them unto them. This Spirit shall make intercession for them and in them, according to the will of God. Hence the gracious assurance is given, that whatsoever they are moved by the Holy Spirit to ask in the name of Christ shall be given them; for the Spirit will not lead them to ask for anything contrary to the mind and will of God. And as none can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost, so none can pray in his name but by the same Spirit. An inspired apostle has assured us that all our necessities are known and amply provided for by our heavenly Father. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." {Phil. iv. 19} But as we have not wisdom to discriminate between our need and what our carnal mind may crave, the blessed Spirit maketh intercession for us, withholding only what would be hurtful to us, and incompatible with the righteous will of God; for he will withhold no good thing from them who walk uprightly. --- The subject of prayer opens before us so wide a field for meditation, that we cannot, we know not where to stop when dwelling on the subject. Our principal object in this article is to relieve, so far as we may be enabled, some trembling ones who, from a sense of unworthiness, and of inability to order their speech aright before the Lord, have been sorely tempted to doubt their right to pray, and fear that its sinful for them to attempt it; we have labored to show that such are the very ones that are the most welcome to approach the awful Majesty of God in prayer and supplication. They come not in their own name, but in the all-prevailing name of him who forever liveth to make intercession for them and in them. --- Prayer, as a

mere duty, is a very dull and unavailing employment, yet it is a duty devolving on all who feel their need of Divine favor, because Christ has enjoined it upon them; but when led by the Spirit to the throne of grace, it is a most delightful privilege. Poor, weak and worthless as we are in and of ourselves, yet, "Sprinkled with reconciling blood, they may approach the throne of God," and not be consumed; because the name of Jesus Christ, their Advocate with the Father, is upon them, and has sealed them with the Holy Spirit of promise. {Eph. i. 13} In prayer we are permitted to hold communion with God, through our High Priest, from over the mercy-seat. The apostle speaks {Eph. vi. 18} of "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," &c; from which we infer that the apostolic practice of social as well as private prayer is to be perpetuated in the church of God until time shall be no more. --- In social prayer, one is mouth for all who are present and qualified by the Spirit to unite in the devotion. If the saints who meet for prayer are, like the primitive saints, all of one heart and one mind, and all are led by the one spirit, there will be no discord, nor confusion, and the prayer expressed in words by him who is mouth for all will be equally the prayer of all. In social prayer we use the plural form of the personal pronouns, 'our,' 'us,' &c., as taught; {Matt. vi. 9-13;} this is proper, because it is the prayer of all who in their hearts can say, Amen. We have many instances recorded of the saints meeting for prayer, and the practice should be continued in the church of God. When Herod the king had killed James with a sword, and had imprisoned Peter also, intending also to deliver him unto death, many were gathered together praying; and their prayers were graciously heard and answered. {Acts xii. 1-19} We have many other accounts of the meeting of the primitive saints at places where prayer was wont to be made; and should not the saints of the present age walk in the footsteps of the early Christians? --- But in social or public prayers, we should carefully avoid all ostentatious display, or effort to elicit the admiration and praise of men. Be not like those who pray to be heard and admired by men; nor should we use vain repetitions, for that is forbidden. Our words should be few; for God is high in the heavens, and we are on the earth. It is not becoming in ministers, while assaying to lead in public or social prayer, to presume to explain or expound anything to the Lord; for he needs no logic or explanation from us, and our prayers are to comprise supplication, intercession and thanksgiving, under a full conviction that the Lord knoweth all about us, that he searches the hearts and tries the reins of all, and with a solemn consciousness that all things are naked and open to his all-seeing eyes. In our public or social prayers, our wandering thoughts are prone to seek the applause of those who are present, and almost forget that we are professedly addressing the God whose dwelling is in the heavens, and from whose sight the inmost secrets of our heart cannot be concealed. The cruel tempter is ever ready to divert our mind from the awful solemnity of holding communion with the eternal God. How cold and dull and formal are our prayers when thus yielding to the carnal impulse of our fleshly nature and the temptation of the adversary; our pride and vain ambition are either inflated or mortified, as we have succeeded or failed to make a display. One would hardly believe Christians could be troubled in this way; but they are the only class that are really troubled on this account. Carnal professors and self-righteous Pharisees feel perfectly satisfied with their prayers if they can secure the applause of men; but those who are taught of God feel and lament the imperfection of their most solemn devotions, for they feel deeply their short-comings; and were it not for the blessed assurance that the Spirit helpeth their infirmities, supplying the ability which they lack, and making intercession for them according to the will of God, they would not dare to take the sacred name of God

upon their lips in prayer or praise. --- The humblest and most simple expression of desire that comes welling up from a broken and contrite heart, is far better than the most eloquent flow of words that charm the carnal ears of men; for the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit God will not despise. --- In our secret prayers, when alone in our closet, that is, when the world is shut out from our mind, and there is none but God can hear, and we feel that our devotion is a personal matter between the trembling suppliant and his God, we use the personal pronouns in their singular form; as, 'my God,' why hast thou forsaken me? God be merciful 'to me;' 'hear me;' 'deliver me,' &c. Whether upon our knees, prostrate on the ground, or upon our beds, or even when our hands are engaged in labor, by night or day, when our heart is drawn out to God in the secret aspirations of the heart, we pray with the spirit and the understanding, even when our lips are sealed in silence. We cannot suppress the secret desire inwrought by the Spirit, and involuntarily arising from the depth of our heart to God as the Giver of every good and perfect gift; and from a deep sense of our own vileness, every ejaculation is presented in the name of Jesus, with a full conviction that we can approach God in no other name. The apostle Peter reminds us that the end of all things is at hand, and admonishes us therefore to "be sober, and watch unto prayer." {I Peter iv. 7} What Jesus our Lord has said unto one, he also says unto all his dear saints, "Watch." "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." In a careful, vigilant watching, we cannot fail to find abundant incentives to prayer; and if our watching does not have the effect to incline us to pray, it must be that we are in the sad condition of those saints of whom Peter speaks, {I Peter i. 9,} who having neglected the admonition given at that chapter, are blind, cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that they have been purged from their old sins. --- In conclusion of this already lengthy article, we wish to say to those who have been exercised upon the subject and who have requested to write upon this important subject; you cannot be too poor, too needy, or too unworthy to call upon the name of the Lord. It is especially for those of just your description of character that God has provided the new and living way, which he has consecrated for all who, being humbled under his mighty hand, do feel their need of his mercy and grace. It is the poor that he filleth with good things, while the rich he sends empty away. --- "Blest are the humble souls that see, Their emptiness and poverty; Treasures of grace to them are given, And crowns of joy laid up in heaven." Gilbert Beebe, Signs of the Times, Editorial. {Volume 47, Middletown, NY, January 1, 1879.}

The Mystery of Godliness

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." {I Tim.3:16} If iniquity, with which all the fallen sons of Adam are so familiar, be a mystery beyond the comprehension of our finite powers, how much more profound and inexplicable must be the mystery of godliness, which can only be known as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit to the children of God, and even to them, while here in the flesh, it is only made known in part. Yet when the apostle says, "without controversy" this mystery is great, we do not understand him to mean that this truth is not controverted by the enemies of the truth, but that among all who are born of the Spirit and taught of God it is so clearly apparent as to admit of no denial or successful contradiction. The popular religion of the world is only on a level with the literature and science of this world, and that they so regard it is demonstrated by their classing it with the things which are taught in the

schools of men. The science of law or medicine in their estimation are as obscure and mysterious as that of godliness; and that an understanding of the latter is as easily attained by study as that of the former. The same appliances are by them resorted to teach godliness, or what they call divinity, as are successfully employed in acquiring a knowledge of law, or of medicine; and they whose intellectual capacities are too limited to make talented lawyers or skillful physicians, are put through a course of study to fit them for the ministry; and they are by them considered quite competent to teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, "know the Lord." But all this proves rather that godliness, in the sense the word is used by the apostle, is a mystery so great and unsearchable by human minds that the wise and prudent of the world have not the remotest conception of it. They are pleased with their own delusion, and are perfectly satisfied with a religious creed of their own vain imagination, which they can reduce to a theory that can be taught and learned in schools of various grades, from the infant and Sunday Schools up to their Colleges and Theological Seminaries, as easily as grammar, arithmetic, or geography are taught and learned. But while we concede to them the ability of teaching what they profanely call divinity, or godliness, the Scriptures of truth declare of them that they are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They may heap to themselves teachers and pupils, but this truth of God they cannot overturn, that God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes, for so it seemed good in his sight. For it has pleased God, in the wisdom of God, that the world by wisdom should not know God; and he has made foolish the wisdom of this world in regard to spiritual things. They who know nothing of the godliness of our text, of course cannot successfully controvert the declaration that it is a great mystery. For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; and none but the spiritual, who are made so by being born of the Spirit, can spiritually discern anything of a spiritual nature. While all natural men are held under chains of darkness, all who are born of God and taught by his Spirit are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the marvelous light of the kingdom of Christ. And all the true light they have they receive from the Sun of Righteousness, in whom was life, and the life was the light of men; so to have this light is to be quickened with that life which is light. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." The word 'godliness' in its general application in the Scriptures, is used to signify a Christian walk and deportment, purity of faith and practice, induced by a holy principle or life implanted in the saints by the New Birth, leading its recipients to a conformity to the precepts and examples of our Lord Jesus Christ. As it is said, "the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, {the saints to whom Paul is writing} that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world." But the particular sense in which it is used in our text is defined as especially applicable to our Lord Jesus Christ. In every sense in which the word is used in the Scriptures, mystery beyond what human reason can solve is involved; but when applied to our Emmanuel, {God with us,} the mystery is far more deep and profound. Our text applies it to the incarnation of the Son of God, or to his manifestation in the flesh. This sacred mystery comprises the wonderful union of Christ and his church, and of the sublime and glorious Economy of Grace, in the salvation of the people of God by and through our Lord Jesus Christ. It involves the mystery of a union of Deity and humanity; of the Creator and the created, wherein the Word was made

flesh and dwelt among his creatures. This mystery would be dismantled of much of its profundity and surpassing glory, in our estimation, if Christ, in his Godhead, were only an emanation from God, a created, or derived offspring of the Godhead, or if it were only some part, as a second or third part of God that came in the flesh. But the Apostle avers that God was manifest in the flesh. He was inspired by the Holy Ghost to use no such terms as, the first person in the Godhead, or the second person, or the third person, but God himself. The same apostle affirms, {Col.2:9,} "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And we challenge those who preach that there were two equal and distinct parts of the Godhead that were not embodied in our Emmanuel, to tell what essential parts of God were not manifest in the flesh? Do they dare to say that the Father was not in him, or that he was not one with the Father, and so perfectly identified that they who have seen the Son have seen the Father also? Do they not know that he is in the Father, and the Father is in him, and that he and the Father are one? How else can it be said in truth that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," if only a part of that fulness dwells in him? How shall we account for this express declaration? We are aware of the names, titles and relations applied distinctively to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but dare not so construe them as to deny that these three are one, or so as to imply a plurality of Gods, or so as to imply that any less than all the fulness of the one only true and living God dwells bodily in our Lord Jesus Christ. He that was manifest in the flesh was and is God. To fully believe the declarations of the Scriptures because they are declared in the Scriptures is not to claim ability to comprehend what they aver; for if finite mortals could comprehend the Deity, it would no longer be a mystery. We notice in our text then that he who was manifest in the flesh is God. We do not understand that God was manifest to all men, for we read of those who know not God; and that he does manifest himself to his saints as he does not unto the world. "He was in the world; and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." Yet, as we shall presently notice, "He was believed on in the world;" but it was by those unto whom he was manifested. Many who saw Jesus when he was here in the flesh, had not the slightest conception of his Eternal Power and Godhead; they saw him only as a root out of dry ground, but saw no beauty or comeliness in him to admire. The manifestation of God to his people is a subject so vast and heavenly that all we can say, or write, or think, falls infinitely below our theme. But the manifestation is thus set forth by Divine Inspiration. "But God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." {II Cor.4:6} All that we can possibly know of God is revealed to us in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." {Mt.11:27} "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." {Jn.14:6} "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God; and Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." {Mt.16:16,17} "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." {Jn.6:45} From these and many other Scriptures it is evident that all we can possibly know of God is revealed to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "God was manifest in the flesh." In the fleshly body in which he was born of the virgin, in which he humbled himself and learned obedience, in which he sorrowed, wept, and

groaned, and died. The body of his flesh is the veil through which, by a new and living way consecrated for us, we have access unto the Father. In the veil of his flesh the fulness of the Godhead dwelt, and no man cometh unto the Father by any other way. {Heb.10:19,20} Even Nicodemus was constrained to confess that no man could do the miracles which he performed, except God were with him. There was a striking manifestation of the Godhead in the wondrous works which he wrought. In healing the sick, in giving sight to the blind, in raising the dead, and casting out devils, the power of God was manifested. But in his complete control of the elements of nature, wherein the winds and waves obeyed his voice, his Godhead was demonstrated while he was here in the body of flesh in which he suffered on the cross. And even in his suffering, the trembling earth, the rending rocks, the darkened heavens, the opening graves, the rising dead, all proclaimed that he was the Son of God; but above all other demonstrations, his resurrection from the dead, and victory over the grave, presented beyond successful controversy his eternal power and Godhead. But God was also manifest in the flesh which he assumed in taking on him the seed of Abraham. And to this wonderful assumption we understand the beloved disciple and apostle to allude in his declaration, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." {I Jn.4:2,3} The church of God is the body of Christ, and including all that are Christ's in the Economy of Grace is called the seed of Abraham, which our Redeemer took on him when he was made flesh. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." {Heb.2:16} "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." {Gal.3:29} "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." {Heb.2:14} The children spoken of in this last quotation are in the context called seed, or the many sons whom Christ was engaged to redeem and bring to glory. "For we {that is, Paul the apostle, and the saints which were at Ephesus, and all the faithful in Christ Jesus} are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" and "for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." {Eph.5:31,32} Without controversy this is a great mystery! This church which is his body, his flesh and his bones, is the temple of the Lord. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early." {Ps.46:5} Here will he dwell forever, for he hath desired it for his habitation. In this temple of the Lord, where his honor dwelleth, and only in this temple which is the ground and pillar of the truth, is the consecrated "Ark of the testimony," and in this temple God is manifest in the flesh. But we pass to consider. He was "justified in the Spirit." In the Spirit of the Lord God which was upon him, by which he was anointed {as the name CHRIST signifies} to sustain his Mediatorial office, to preach good tidings to the meek, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. {Isa.61:1-3} This comprehends the Mediatorial work of our Divine Redeemer, in taking on

him our flesh, the transgressions of his people were laid upon him. In being made flesh, or taking part of the same flesh and blood that the children are partakers of, he was made of a woman, made under the law which held its stern demands against us, and all the sins of all his people were laid on him, and he bore them in the body of his flesh, and put them away by the sacrifice of himself. Thus he was numbered with the transgressors. Although immaculately pure and holy, by the laying on him the transgressions of all his people ample satisfaction for them all was exacted at his hands. In his flesh, {that is in the seed of Abraham which he took on him,} he was condemned to die, the just for the unjust, to redeem us to God; and it pleased God to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. Had he not been God, as well as man, and Mediator between God and men, the sacrifice must have failed; for if only man, it would have been but a human sacrifice and our justification could not have resulted from his death. He was put to death in the flesh; the Mediator was put to death in the flesh. Justice could not be satisfied with anything less than his death; but although put to death in the flesh, he was quickened and raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, and by the Spirit of Immortality by which he triumphed over death, he was justified. He was delivered up for our offences, and raised from the dead for our justification. Crushed beneath the weight of the sins of all his members, he stood condemned to die; but having washed them from all their pollutions in his most precious and efficacious blood, justice could demand no more at his hands. Through the Eternal Spirit by which he offered himself without spot to God, he arose from the dead, and thus by his glorious resurrection the Eternal Spirit by which he was quickened demonstrated that he had effectually put away sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake," for he has magnified and honored all the righteous demands of the holy law. He has abolished death, and brought immortality to light through the Gospel. The Spirit justified him, in its approval of his perfect work, and to him unbarred the gates of death, and brought again from the dead his crucified body. And by his resurrection all his members, whose sins he bore, are also freely justified through the redemption that is in him. "God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet." {Ps.47:5} The victory is complete, the redemption of all his seed is accomplished, and they are by his resurrection from the dead begotten again to a lively hope, and the challenge is given, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." {Rom.8:33,34} The justification of Christ as the Mediatorial head of his church secures, or rather includes the justification of all his mystical body; for if in this he had failed, the object of his sufferings and death would have failed. For they were included in the seed of Abraham which he took on him, and they are crucified {legally} with him, dead with him, risen with him to newness of life. Buried with him by baptism into death, and risen with him from under the curse and dominion of the law, and now being dead to the law by the body of Christ, they are made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Justified in the Spirit also, in the Spirit's work in calling and quickening of the people of God, and in the faithful application of his blood and righteousness experimentally and effectually to all for whom his blood was shed, and for whom that everlasting righteousness was brought in. In all the work of the Spirit, in teaching, leading, comforting, and making intercession for the redeemed people of God, it justifies Christ; for it is all in testimony of the efficacy and efficiency of his Mediatorial work. Every thought and every emotion in the saints inspired by

the Spirit testifies his justification, in the Spirit. Hence every spirit that is of God confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, and that he has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and accomplished all that was given him of the Father to do. And every spirit that does not so confess and exalt him is antichrist. He was "seen of angels." Whether we understand the Apostle to speak of the heavenly hosts, or of chosen witnesses, called and qualified of God to proclaim Christ and the resurrection, the declaration is sustained by corroborative testimony in the Divine Record. Of the heavenly host one was sent to announce his conception to the virgin, and to Joseph; and a multitude of them proclaimed his birth to the shepherds in Jerusalem. Angels came from heaven to minister to him when in agony in the garden, and angels were present at his resurrection. To the truth, therefore of the declaration of our text there are celestial witnesses to confirm the testimony of his advent, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension to glory, when a cloud received him out of the sight of his apostles. But the messengers by whom Israel received the law are also called angels; they received the law by the disposition of angels; these angels saw his day, rejoiced in it and were glad. The apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the gospel church are also called elect or chosen angels. All the apostles saw him; although Paul was as one born out of due time, yet to him he was manifested as the risen and exalted Savior; and he was seen, after his resurrection by more than five hundred at once. Many of his angels or messengers saw him in his incarnation, and since his resurrection from the dead he is revealed by the Spirit to the faith of all his chosen witnesses. Hence they can say, in testimony, "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." {I Jn.1:1 & 3} "Preached unto the Gentiles." This part of the divine mystery baffled the understanding of the Jews, who had been taught traditionally to believe that they alone were to be interested in the Messiah which was to come, and that the Gentiles were to have no part, nor lot in his salvation. As they had read and understood the Old Testament, they could not understand that any of the Gentiles could participate in the benefits resulting from his coming. Nor does it appear that the Gentiles understood this mystery which Paul was called to preach amongst them. He says, "for this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles; if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; {as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ;} which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." {Eph.3:1-8} Again he says, "whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." {Col.1:25-27} From these Scriptures it appears that the preaching of Christ to the Gentiles, and their

salvation through Christ, is an important part of the mystery of godliness which beyond all controversy is very great. But another part of the mystery is found in that he was. – “Believed on in the world.” When we consider the credulity of the human family, and with what avidity they will drink in error and delusion, one would think it not strange that the truth; especially when attested by strong demonstrative evidence, should also be believed. But such is the depravity of mankind that none can truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ while in an unquickened state. Of nominal professors there is no lack, but of them who believe to the saving of their souls there are comparatively but few, and unto them it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only that they should believe on, but also that they should suffer for his sake. “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” {II Thes.2:13} “Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” {Jn.6:29} “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” {Acts 13:48} Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the fruit of the Spirit, and until the power of the Spirit is given, none can possess it. Christ, and not the creature, is the Author and Finisher of it; and when we consider the aversion of the natural mind of men to the truth as it is in Jesus, we are amazed at the wonderful display of the Sovereign Power and Grace by which the Savior is believed on in the world. He is not believed on by the world, but by those whom God has chosen out of the world. His kingdom is not of the world, but still a portion of it is in the world. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” {Jn.1:10-13} It is a mystery indeed to the world that any sentiment beyond or above the comprehension of human reason should be believed on in the world; that that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, that hath not entered into the heart of man, {of an unquickened man,} and which God hath hidden from the wisdom of this world, should be believed; for the world can conceive of no belief that is not based upon evidence present to the natural mind and reasoning faculties of the natural man. And even to the enlightened Christian, the mystery of godliness plainly appears in the revelations of the Spirit to the heaven born subjects of regeneration, by which the truth and amazing greatness of this mystery is presented to the faith of babes and sucklings in Christ Jesus. Paul said to the church of God which was at Corinth, “and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” “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. 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. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.” {I Cor.2:4-7, 13-15} “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.” {Ps.35:14} And finally, he was. – “Received up into glory.” This seems to be the crowning climax of the

mystery of Godliness. The reception of Christ up into glory, as the first begotten from the dead, and the first fruits of them that slept, not only demonstrates the perfection of his Mediatorial work in the salvation of his people, and his exaltation as the Mediatorial Head of the church, 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; but it also gives assurance that all his members also shall in due time be raised up and glorified with him. The triumphant voice of the risen Savior, as anticipated by prophecy, is thus described by the inspired psalmist; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift 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." {Ps.24:7-10} The mystery of godliness shines in resplendent glory, in that as the Head of the church, the King of saints, the Resurrection and Life of all his people, the heavens have received him, and he has now entered within the veil for them, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. Gilbert Beebe, Signs of the Times, Editorial. Volume 39, Middletown, NY, August 1, 1871.

Predestination & Justification

In reply to the inquiries of brother D. D. Mouser, we feel prepared to say that in our understanding of the subject, the Predestination of God fully comprehends the final and ever-lasting Justification of all the redeemed people of our God, and extends to all the events of time, however great or small; from the creation of worlds to the flight of a sparrow or the falling of a hair of our heads. But when we speak of Predestination we speak of it as having to do with the execution of the great designs of God by which He has determined the time, place, order and destiny of all beings, worlds or events, that every event must be accomplished in the order of time in the exact order and succession of events that He has determined in His infinite wisdom. We must remember that we in our earthly nature are creatures of time and subject to the vicissitude of time; but God is "the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity and his name is holy." Nothing can be beforehand with God, nor behindhand with Him. He declares the end from the beginning, and all things are naked and present to His infinite and omniscient eye. Predestination therefore signifies to us the fixed, determined purpose and counsel of God, in which He has ordained irrevocably the destiny of all things, before they are brought to pass in the order of time. Of this, however, men are willingly ignorant, that with God a thousand years are as one day, or as a watch of the night. Time is measured out to finite beings, in days, and weeks, and years; measured by the constantly revolving wheels of nature. Our finite minds cannot yet comprehend the infinity of eternity in distinction from the passing events of time. "The things which are seen {by us} are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Time itself is a creature, or created thing, which had a beginning and shall have an end. Predestination therefore expresses to us the unerring certainty of the accomplishment of all the purposes and designs of our God, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The most perfect knowledge of God that has ever been given to men, is but very limited, while here in our time state, "we see but in part, we know but in part;" but how groveling must be the mind that can believe that the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, created the heavens and the earth with all they contain, without any definite, settled or determinate purpose in view, or without a certain knowledge that He was able to govern and control

them so as to secure the perfect accomplishment of all that was contemplated and determined in His own mind and will. The utter failure of poor finite mortals to comprehend how the entrance of sin and death, and all the train of evils which exist in the world are to consummate the vast, inscrutable design of God, is not strange, for we have only that measure of knowledge that God has been pleased to give us. But we are not to think that God is such an one as we are. "Deep in unfathomable mines, Of never failing skill, He treasures up his bright designs, And works his sovereign will." It is fully sufficient for the saints to know that God has a purpose worthy of Himself in all his counsels and decrees; and that "he is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain" in his own good time and way. The perfect and complete salvation of all God's chosen people, including their redemption and justification, is most assuredly secured by the predestinating purpose and decree of God. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Now, "what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." {Rom.8:29-34} The purpose and decree of God in the predestination of all the election of grace, to the adoption of children, and to make them accepted in the Beloved, is the purpose which God proposed in himself before the world began; but the justification itself is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who was delivered up for their offenses and raised again for their justification. The work of justification is that by which they are washed from all their sins, purged from all their guilt, and made pure and holy by the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. All this was embraced in the purpose and grace which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, for they were all blessed in Him with all spiritual blessings according as they were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Those who are the subjects of this work of justification were ungodly. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." {Rom.4:4-8} The work of justification required the shedding of the blood of Christ, for without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." {Rom.5:8,9} Brother Mouser will perceive that the work of justification is that by which ungodly sinners are washed in the atoning blood of Christ and cleansed from all pollution, made holy and without blame before God. That eternal life which was given us in Christ was never contaminated with sin; it was perfect, pure and holy; from everlasting it is that incorruptible seed which, being incorruptible could need no atonement, no work of justification. It is in our Adamic nature that we have all sinned, and from the sin of which Christ came, in our flesh, to redeem us from all iniquity, and by his one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Some have failed to perceive the distinction

between the eternal perfection of that eternal life which was given us in Christ Jesus, and which is manifested in us when we are born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever, and that justification of the ungodly which is by and through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. It is a glorious truth that; "In union with the Lamb, From condemnation free, The saints from everlasting were, And shall forever be." We may speak of eternal justification in the same sense in which we speak of eternal redemption; for our justification is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, "who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." {Tit.2:14, 3:3-7} These scriptures forbid that we should separate the justification of the saints from the Mediatorial work of Christ in offering himself through the Eternal Spirit without spot unto God, and thereby obtaining eternal redemption for us. The great anxiety of the saints is to first learn by revelation how God can be just and the justifier of such guilty sinners as we have found ourselves to be, and to know by happy experience that Christ has borne our sins in his own body on the tree, and put them away by his one offering; and that having satisfied the law and justice of God on our behalf, in his holy life and bitter death, he arose from the dead for our justification, and has raised us up from under the guilt of sin, the curse and dominion of the Law, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in new and resurrection life and immortality. May we know him and power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and be conformed to his death. "Then should the earth's old pillars shake, And all the wheels of nature break; Our steadfast souls shall fear no more, Than solid rocks when billows roar." Gilbert Beebe, Signs of the Times, Editorial. Volume 44, Middletown, NY, July 15, 1870.

To whom is the Gospel Addressed

There is, and long has been, much controversy between legalists and the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as to what the gospel is, but also in regard to whom it is or should be addressed. If all the parties engaged in the controversy could understand the scriptural signification of the word, those who are now zealously contending for a universal application of it to all mankind indiscriminately, would desire rather to restrict than to extend its application, as they have ever exerted themselves to suppress its publication. What they call gospel differs very widely from what Christ and the holy apostles proclaimed in the primitive days of the gospel church. Our Redeemer encountered the same class of zealous fanatics, who compassed sea and land to disseminate their false gospel, but a perversion of the gospel of Christ; and exposing and denouncing their hypocrisy charged them with teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men. The voluntary religious institutions originated and enjoined by men without any divine authority from God are now very widely taught and greedily received by graceless men, and such teaching is by them dignified with the name of gospel. Their preachers may entertain conflicting opinions in regard to what is contained in the Scriptures, for the doctrine of the Bible and the laws and

institutions of Christ are regarded by them as minor points, while opposite sects can freely unite in opposing the doctrine of Christ, and in the propagation of any or all of the inventions of men. They can and do, with much seeming cordiality, take each other by the hand, and with wonderful reciprocity compliment each other as "truly evangelical," while in truth there are but two points in which they are really agreed among themselves; the one is that salvation is attainable by works, and the other is in denouncing the true followers of the Lamb. As to precisely what works will secure salvation, and by what mode of warfare they should fight the saints, they may differ widely without interruption of fellowship. What they call gospel may be obtained in any quantity from the schools of men, in which every man is engaged in teaching his brother and neighbour, saying, "Know the Lord." From Infant and Sabbath Schools, and Bible Classes, as well as from Theological Seminaries; from books and tracts, and various other sources, they can procure all of that kind of delusion which they call gospel in indefinite quantities. We would by no means misrepresent them; but we have failed to understand their language, if what they call gospel is not with them an article of commerce. Do they not propose to send it to the heathen; to Burma, Hindustan, and to all the distant islands where they can find a profitable market? They gravely tell us, in a business way, what amount of capital must be invested, what number of men and amount of money, how many ships and seamen must be employed, and how long it will take to supply the world. To make their false gospel salable, they must, of course, adapt it to the taste of all. Those who have no ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches, have no difficulty in hearing the doctrines of men; hence there is a great cry about preaching to sinners. Their doctrine is precisely what unconverted sinners can feast upon; for instead of being told that they are condemned already and the wrath of God abideth on them, they are told that they are probationers, free agents, and have ability to move by their prayers the power that moves the world. Instead of being told that "no man can come to the Father but by Christ," and that "no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him," they are told that they can do a great deal for the Lord. And this is profanely called preaching the gospel to sinners; while with an air of affected superiority, they charge those who proclaim salvation by Grace in Christ, that they do not preach the gospel to sinners, while they themselves do not preach a word of gospel to saints or sinners. It is not gospel to utter falsehood in the name of the Lord; there is no gospel in telling men what they can and must do, or be damned. To call on dead sinners to repent and believe the gospel implies ability in them to do so, whereas the gospel proclaims that Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins. It is as exclusively the work of our exalted Saviour to give repentance as it is to forgive sins, and the dead sinner can no more do the one than the other. True repentance which is unto life and needeth not to be repented of, must proceed from life. If the repentance be spiritual, it proceeds from a spiritual source, and must be preceded by the quickening Spirit of God. The sorrow of the world worketh death; but godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life; and to be godly, in distinction from the sorrow of the world, it must come from God, it must be given by the exalted Prince and Saviour. Faith is also the gift of God, Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of it, if it be genuine; for it is not the faith of the creature, but it is the faith of the Son of God, and without it no man can please God. Paul says, it is "not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." To preach the opposite to what the inspired Scriptures teach, is not preaching the gospel to saints, nor to sinners. But we propose to show how the Scriptures define the word

gospel. Compare Isaiah 61:1, with Luke 4:18, and you will see that what is by the prophet called good tidings, is by our Lord rendered gospel, and to prevent any caviling, the good tidings in the prophecy, and the gospel in its fulfillment, are defined to mean, good tidings to the meek - "to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." Observe who these meek, poor, broken hearted, prisoners are, and what gospel is preached to them. The Spirit of the Lord God qualifies those on whom it is poured, to follow the blessed Saviour in preaching good tidings, or gospel, to the meek; not to the proud, haughty, and self-righteous. It proclaims liberty, not to free agents who were never in bondage, who have all the religion they live for, and could have as much more if they pleased to work for it. The poor broken hearted, helpless prisoner hails with joy the tidings that proclaims his release from prison. But how could the same tidings be joyful, or gospel, to those who are not poor, nor captive, nor broken hearted, nor meek? When Jesus said to the poor dying thief, "this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," we cannot doubt it was good tidings to him. But would the same words, if spoken to his murderers who were reviling him, been appreciated as gospel tidings? The gospel is discriminating; it finds out the "humbled sinner in whose breast a thousand thoughts revolve." You who complain that we do not preach the gospel to sinners, would you have us, if we meet a band of robbers, pirates or murderers, say to them, in gospel terms, "fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom?" Or to a company of Atheists, "let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Jesus?" If this is not what they mean by preaching the gospel to sinners, how far short of this do they come, when they address the most blessed and sacred assurances which Christ gave to the meek, the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the peace makers, and the persecuted saints, to unconverted sinners, as an inducement to them to "get religion," saying to them, "Seek, and ye shall find; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you; Ask, and it shall be given to you?" Not one of these gracious promises were ever addressed by our Lord or any minister of his to any but to quickened subjects of his saving grace. Instead then of preaching the gospel to saints or sinners, they pervert the gospel, in attempting to give the children's bread unto dogs, in direct defiance of the special command of Jesus Christ, who positively forbid that that which is holy should be given to the dogs. By their artful misapplication of the Scriptures, they are charged by an apostle with "turning the truth of God into a lie," by making the Scriptures seem to say what they do not say; and so by handling the word of God deceitfully, they not only lead the blind into the ditch, but frequently perplex and worry many of the unsuspecting honest-hearted enquirers after truth. We will correct a misapprehension of the position and practice of the ministers of our order. While we believe and preach the gospel, as Christ and his apostles did, wherever a door is open for that purpose, openly addressing our preaching to everyone within the sound of our voice, the gospel which we preach discriminates between the living and the dead. It is a savor of life unto life, to those who are quickened by the Holy Ghost, and a savor of death unto death, to them that perish. It is "to the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." And if our preaching is not a savor of death unto

death to the ungodly, and a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, and if it be not a savor of life to the quickened, and if it be not to them that are called, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, then it is not apostolic preaching. Who ever knew a true minister of Christ to refuse to preach the gospel to any but saints? We cannot search the hearts or try the reins of those to whom we preach; but the word which we preach makes the discrimination; for it is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. {Heb.4:12,13} The gospel which we preach is good tidings to the meek; but if any part of our audience are not meek, it is not gospel, or good tidings to them. All who have an ear to hear, are more than welcome to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. But if any have not hearing ears, the preachers cannot supply them; for the hearing ear and understanding heart are of the Lord. The Son of God alone has power to cause the dead to hear his voice and live; for the words which he speaks to them, they are spirit, and they are life. Therefore his sheep hear his voice, and he knows them, and they follow him; for he gives to them eternal life, and they shall never perish. He, and he alone, has power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him. All this we preach to every creature; but we do not give the children's bread to any but the children, nor do we give what belongs to the dogs to the children. But let us examine the parable of the marriage of the king's son. {Mt.22:1-14} Unto whom, and for what purpose was it spoken by our Lord, and why spoken in parable? The context will show that it was addressed to the Jews, including the Pharisees, who were so much enraged on hearing it, that they went and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. {See verse 15} As whatsoever God speaks is certain to secure the object for which it is spoken. {Is.55:11} What was accomplished by this parable shows conclusively for what purpose it was spoken. And the reason why he spake to all but his saints in parables is given in his own words to his disciples in Luke 8:10. "And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?" Alluding to the parable of a sower, "and he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." We must reject Christ's own explanation of his reason for using parables, or admit that this parable was spoken expressly to discriminate between his disciples to whom was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and all others from whom that gift was withheld, and by the inscrutable purpose of God all but the disciples, in seeing should not see, and hearing should not understand. Instead of his parables being used to elucidate, illustrate, and make the mysteries of the kingdom of God clear and plain to the understanding of the ungodly, they were designed to make them the more obscure, that they might be a stumbling block to the Jews, and folly to the Greeks. "Therefore Jesus rejoiced in spirit, when he said, 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 seemeth good in thy sight." Neither this nor any other parable, correctly understood, will sustain the position taken, that the address of the ministers of Christ should be indiscriminate. The same gospel preaching which elucidates the mysteries to the saints on whom the heavenly gift is bestowed, involves them in parabolic obscurity to all but such. Still the question may return, what does the parable mean? We have already shown that it

was intended like all the parables to baffle the wisdom of the Scribes, Pharisees and work mongers of that and of all subsequent ages, and bring down their lofty imagination, humble the pride of man, and cause that none should glory, only in the Lord. It was nevertheless full of wholesome instruction to those to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom. The kingdom of God, which in this parable or similitude is compared to a king who made a marriage for his son, embraces Christ and his people in both the legal and then prospective dispensations. The marriage of the king's son represents the public espousal, and marriage of Christ and his bride, the church, which was then about to be consummated, according to prophecy. The oxen and fatlings, representing all the sacrifices under the law, had been killed, and the Bridegroom had come to redeem his bride from under the law, that she might be identified with him in his resurrection from the dead. The marriage festivities, or feast, was now about to be spread, in the opening of the gospel dispensation. The Jews, as a nation or people, had been notified and bidden to the marriage by the prophets, and they had professed to be anxiously awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom and announcement of the feast. "The law and the prophets were until John." John the Baptist had announced the advent of Christ as the Bridegroom, saying, "He that hath the bride, is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom rejoiceth because of the Bridegroom's voice; thus my joy is fulfilled." John's mission was to make ready a people prepared of the Lord. Seventy servants had been sent to announce to the commonwealth of Israel that the feast was prepared; but they were not ready to leave Judaism, nor had they any disposition to embrace Christianity. These servants had been forbidden to go with this proclamation to any but those Jews which had been bidden by the prophets. "Go ye not in the way of the Gentiles," nor into any city, even of the Samaritans were they not to enter, but to go exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "But they made light of it." He came to his own, and his own received him not. He grew up among them as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground; he hath no form, nor comeliness; and when they saw him there was no beauty or attraction for them to desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; "he was despised, and we esteemed him not." {Is.53:1-3} Again other servants, the apostles, were sent out, with the same charge to go only to the Jews which were bidden; but they made no serious matter of it; and they slew the servants. This was literally true of the disciples and apostles which were sent with this message to the Jews; they not only rejected their message, but put the messengers to death. All this preceded the wrath which was brought upon the Jewish nation, when nationally they were destroyed, and Jerusalem and other cities were terribly destroyed. Then said the king to his servants, or ministers; the wedding is ready, but they which were bidden, the carnal Israelites, were not worthy. The law could make nothing perfect. Their legal self-righteousness was but filthy rags, and would not answer for a wedding garment. They with all their filthy rags, or legal works, were now utterly rejected, and the decree of the king is published, that none of them which were bidden, or to whom the prophets had been sent, should taste of the supper, the gospel feast. And now the servants are sent forth to the Gentiles, who had not been bidden to the feast as were the Jews. Comparing the version of Luke 16 of this same parable with that of Matthew, we perceive that when those who were 'whole' had declined the feast, the servants were instructed to gather from the streets and lanes of Jerusalem, or Israel, "the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind;" quite a different description of guests; yet the very description to whom the gospel is good tidings; and of this description there were

gathered by the apostles from the secluded lanes and streets of Israel all the original constituent members of the gospel organization. And the apostles reported to their Lord, saying, "It is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." Poor, helpless, halt and blind sinners who felt their poverty, and had no works or merits of their own to plead, were gathered to the gospel feast; but those of that character called from the Jews did not exhaust the provisions of grace, and the gospel proclamation is by divine command extended to the high-way and hedges of the Gentile world. "Go ye," the ministers of the everlasting gospel, who had received a "Go ye" from their King, "and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage." Certainly not as many of the self-righteous work-mongers, but as many as they should find of the character already gathered into the marriage, of the poor, lame, broken hearted, helpless and guilt-stricken; bid them welcome, in the name of the King to the marriage. But none others should partake of the feast, as we see how he fared who came in not having on the wedding garment. The broad phylacteries of self-righteous Pharisees would not do; the guest must be clothed with garments of salvation, as sinners saved by grace alone, and covered with the robe of Christ's own righteousness, that is the wedding dress; and a profession of religion without it will avail nothing. All who come in without God's grace will be thrust out without his favor. Again, permit us to ask, What is there in this parable that can be justly construed to favor an indiscriminate address of the gospel ministry to all mankind? The work of the gospel ministry is very clearly and fully stated in the words of our risen Saviour to the apostles immediately before he ascended to heaven. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This is a most vitally important introduction to their commission. If there are any sinners who have power to resist his will, or to secure their own salvation, or to prevent their own salvation, then all power in earth is not in him. If ministers have power to save souls, to quicken dead sinners, or to prevent their quickening and salvation, then there is power besides what is vested in him. Or if Theological Schools have power to prepare men for the gospel ministry, or Mission Boards have power to commission men to preach, then that power is not exclusively found in him. The fact is not only in itself important, but it is also important that all who are called by him to the work should know it; for it is upon this very 'therefore' that they are commanded to go. Go ye therefore, or from this consideration. It does not allow the alternative to them to tarry at home, and send somebody else. "Go ye therefore." And what? "Teach all nations." He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, having all power in both worlds, has a right to send them over every state, territory, and division of the universe; and no king, potentate or ruler of the earth has any legitimate right to forbid, or throw impediments in their way. All nations. The command of Christ is no longer restricted to the Jews; now the middle wall of partition is taken down, and the messengers of Christ are commanded to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. For God has a people in every tribe and nation, and his gospel shall search and find them out, and call them out; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. That is as was understood and practiced by the apostles, baptizing all who gladly receive the word, and who believe with all their heart on the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus by baptism adding them manifestively to the apostles, and to the apostolic church. "Teaching them." They need instruction, and Christ has by his supreme authority authorized this manner of instruction, by and through the diversified gifts which he has received for and given to them. But what are they to teach them? Not the arts and sciences of this world; for in the knowledge of

them the ministers of Christ are generally quite limited themselves. But the orders of the King are very plain and definite. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." No new lessons that Jesus has not commanded the apostles. No progression beyond the commands of Christ. Nothing that he has commanded may be omitted. Nothing that he has not commanded may be added. If any man shall add to the words of the book of this prophecy, or instruction, God shall add to him the plagues written in this book; and if any man shall take from the words of his instructions, he shall be expelled from the church of God, the communion of the saints, and from the privileges of the Holy City, New Jerusalem. But, "Blessed and happy are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs." We have been the more particular in showing what the gospel is, by whom, and to whom Christ has commanded it be preached, that but all who read may see that very much of what passes currently for gospel at our day, is but the teaching for doctrines the commandments and institutions of men, instead of the all things whatsoever Christ commanded his apostles to teach. In conclusion of this extended article we wish to add a few words in regard to the object and utility of the gospel ministry. The apostle, who is commanded to teach us, defines it thus: "Feed the flock of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." Jesus commanded Peter, saying, "Feed my sheep," and "feed my lambs." None but the flock of God can feed upon the gospel; none but they can live on every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The beloved disciple and inspired apostle John says, "ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." {I Jn.4:4-6} Finally, as the sun in the heavens can only be seen in its own light, so the light and glory of the everlasting gospel can only be discerned in its own divine radiance. Until God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in our hearts, we cannot comprehend the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gilbert Beebe {Editorial: Signs of the Times, 1869}

Keys of the Kingdom

The apostles are by the authority of Christ seated upon twelve thrones, to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. And being divinely qualified for the very responsible and important position to which Christ has elevated them, their judgment and decisions on every point of doctrine, rule of order, and exposition of every precept of the law of Christ, the establishment of every ordinance belonging to the house of God, together with all the relative duties and privileges devolving on or belonging to the saints, regulating their deportment in the church, and all their intercourse with the world, is accurately considered, authoritatively decided, and unalterably established, never to be amended, improved nor repealed so long as this world shall stand. By the special command of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the Only Wise God, our Savior, they are commissioned to teach the disciples of Christ of all subsequent ages, to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded them. And to prevent the possibility of the slightest failure, from forgetfulness or any other cause, the Holy Ghost is sent down from heaven, like a rushing mighty wind, to qualify them perfectly by its unerring inspiration, and to bring to their remembrance all the instructions which

Christ has given them. Without the possibility of committing an error in their official administration of judgment, all they have bound on earth is bound in heaven, and all they have loosed on earth is loosed in heaven. In every decision they have made, they have spoken as the Holy Ghost has given them utterance, God himself has spoken by them, and from their decisions there is no appeal. None may claim that they are disciples of Christ who are not governed by the decisions of the apostles in all matters of faith and practice; nor can any church, or branch of the church of Christ, be known as such, where Christ does not sit upon the throne of his glory, and his apostles with him, upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (See Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30 and Isaiah 32:1.) Where ever Christ is recognized upon his Mediatorial throne, his apostles must also be recognized as his authorized judges and exponents of his laws. Our obedience to Christ is the test of our discipleship, and if we reject his apostles, we also reject him, and therefore cannot be his disciples or his church. Gilbert Beebe {Signs of the Times - 1866 - Editorials Volume 6}

Keys of the Kingdom

In the organization of the gospel kingdom, Christ has given authority to his princes to rule in judgment (Isaiah 32:1). Not to make laws but to rule in judgment, that is to interpret his laws, and apply them as the only divinely authorized rule for the government of the subject of his spiritual authority. Jesus said to his apostles, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28)." To qualify the apostles for the discharge of this important work, they required a greater amount of power than that which was given to their brethren. To them the King gave the keys of the Kingdom of heaven, that whatsoever they bound on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever they loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven. By the keys, we understand the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. In their commission he commanded them to teach baptized believers to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them; and lest any precept, ordinance or rule might be forgotten, he promised to send the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, who, when he came, should bring all things to their remembrance. And as, without this key, they were utterly incompetent to give judgment with infallible certainty that their decisions were ratified in heaven, he bade them tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from heaven. As all power is of God, it must come from heaven...Their ability to sit in judgment, to bind and loose, as God would approve and ratify in heaven, was the power with which they were to be endowed from heaven, when filled with the Holy Ghost, and speaking only as the Spirit gave them utterance, they could not fail to bind and loose according to the will of God. Consequently their decisions are final and conclusive, admitting of no appeal to any higher tribunal. As the apostle John declares, "We (the apostles) are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error (I John 4:6)." As these authorized apostles judge and speak as the spirit of truth dictates, all who profess the same spirit of truth in their hearts will hear, and be governed by their decisions. They know that, as the authority of the apostles is of God, they cannot reject the apostles' decisions, instructions and admonitions without involving themselves in disobedience to God. Thus next to the King, the apostles occupy the highest position of power or authority in the church of Jesus Christ, and let every soul in the spiritual kingdom be subject to them as the higher power; knowing that their power is of

God. All that is approved of God in doctrine, discipline, ordinances and order, faith or practice is found in their decisions and instructions to the church of God; and all the saints are as imperatively required to reject all that the apostles have not enjoined as they are to observe and obey all that they have enjoined. Gilbert Beebe {Signs of the Times - 1864 - Editorials Volume 6}