

OLD SCHOOL WRITINGS OF J.F. JOHNSON

Introductory Letter.

New Castle, Henry Co., Ind., March 18, 1846.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I for some time past have occasionally read your paper, and believing that you contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, I now, together with some of my brethren, wish to become a subscriber. You are unacquainted with me, and I will therefore endeavor to give you a few sketches of my former life.

I was a sinner from my very birth, and most of my days have been spent in a way calculated to destroy myself, and dishonor that beneficent Being whose liberal bounty sustained me, and whose matchless goodness and power preserved me. Indeed, I have been made to conclude that it was a signal display of his forbearance and mercy that such a rebel was suffered to live, and participate in the common blessings of this life. I was under the restraint of pious parents, and particularly a mother, who lived many years and died a member of the old Regular Baptist Church, who took great pains in teaching me many moral lessons; and I cannot say that I did not present to the world what men generally term a fair character. But the mischief was within, for there was a heart deceitful and desperately wicked above all things; and I did not, neither could I, know it. I often went to meeting, and heard, I suppose, almost all sorts of preaching. Sometimes I heard of the joys of heaven, and sometimes of the pains of hell. Heaven presented no joys to me; but often when meditating upon a frightful place of endless torment my natural fears were aroused, and I at length resolved to become religious, that I might escape punishment. I had heretofore thought this a considerable task, but found it (as the Arminians say) to be as easy as to turn my hand over; for I made, as I thought, wonderful progress in religious matters, but did not make a formal profession for fear of being less thought of by some of my young companions, (religion not being quite so fashionable then as at present,) but postponed the time of making it public until I should change my manner of living, yet continued at some times to hold my religion very sacred, and at other times I would make such blunders as would almost cause me to conclude that I had fallen from grace, and again I would set hard at work to regain the ground that I had lost. At length I took to myself a companion, but the business that necessarily followed had a tendency to wear out my religion, rather than cause me to make a public profession of it, and I therefore lost it.

This is a short account of my first religious career, and what was it that prompted me to it? The fears of torment. What did it consist in? Self-righteousness, and consequently self-applause. How did I get it? By my works. How did I keep it? By my works. How did I lose it? By my works. And so it was all works and no grace; my deceitful, wicked heart was untouched by the love of God, I was deaf to the sound of salvation through a

Redeemer crucified, blind to the beauty and excellency of a Savior, for he appeared to me as a root out of dry ground. I was destitute of an understanding of that eternal, unchangeable and sure plan of salvation that is exhibited in the covenant of grace; and such religion as I first had I fear constitutes a great part of that which is so much talked about and boasted of in the present day.

But to return to my story. I removed from Virginia to Indiana in the fall of 1829, and in the spring of 1830 I hope the Lord was pleased to dispel, by the light of his Spirit some of the gross darkness that enshrouded my mind, and enable me to realize in some degree my true character. But O! The malignity of my heart and the turpitude of my nature were awful to behold; and while he portrayed to me my miserably defiled character, he seemed to give me an exhibition of his own infallible purity. But how great the contrast! Uncontaminated by any of the crimes that blackened mine, he appeared indeed undefiled and full of glory! His righteous law appeared to be uttering awful accents against me, while vindictive justice, with stern grasp, seemed to hold his uplifted sword to slay the culprit; and what I had formerly thought to be my good works, and of which I had so much boasted, now appeared as filthy rags, and were dashed to the shades at once. I could now plead for mercy, but justice appeared to have cut off all its avenues. Then in my miserable condition I could only cry, "Lord, save, I perish," while an intolerable load of guilt seemed to be pressing me down, and under which I groaned, being burdened.

It appears to me that if ever there was a soul that stood in need of sovereign, free, distinguishing and saving grace at any time, I did at that time; and those who have passed through a similar scene, and may see this, can probably better judge of my feelings than I can express them, upon hearing the soul-cheering words, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee," and upon feeling a bosom that had been so long filled with darkness, and a mind that had been so grievously tormented and writhing under a burden of guilt and distress, at once relieved of it all.

Never can I forget the beautiful morning in the month of June, when the heavens appeared to open to my view, and present the loveliest object that a poor, lost sinner ever beheld. That bosom, which a little while before had felt as if it must burst with grief, now appeared to be expanded with the love of God. The beautiful grove that overshadowed me, and which the morning sun was just tinging with its beautiful hue, appeared to wave with exquisite beauty, and bow with profound reverence to its all-glorious Author, while all creation seemed to reiterate the praise of that "Word" that had spoken her into existence.

The evidence that I then seemed to have of my many, and aggravated crimes greatly humbled me, and the sight of the Lovely One that had borne my sins in his own body on the tree appeared to fill me with joy unspeakable and full of glory. When I opened and perused the revealed will of my heavenly Father and Benefactor, it was a most precious theme to me, but never had been before; hence I am made to conclude that the gospel was designed to give food, comfort and instruction to the living, and not life to the dead. I

fondly, but vainly anticipated continual joy through my following days, but O, how sadly I have been mistaken in this, for I find still belonging to me a nature averse to all that is good; and I have been experimentally taught that it is through much tribulation that we must enter the kingdom.

I was baptized in June, 1830, with my companion and three others. It seemed to be a time of much rejoicing with the little church (Lebanon) with which we united, and with whom I have had many comfortable seasons, and some sorrowful ones mingled with them. I was called to labor in my Master's vineyard in 1837; and as I had been thoroughly convinced of his sovereignty in the dispensation of his grace and mercy, both in his word and by my own experience, I have been constrained to contend for it. Surely his love is sovereign, for he has loved his elect with an everlasting love, and when they were dead in sins. His choice is sovereign, for they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. His grace is sovereign, for it was given us in him before the world began. His mercy is sovereign, for he will have mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thus he exhibits to us in his word an unalterable and eternal way of salvation by grace, and grace only, one which Satan nor sin has ever been able to overthrow or effect the least change in. Such a way as this is well adapted to the situation of his children, who by nature are children of wrath, and dead in trespasses and sins, and calculated, too, to wrest the honor from the hands of man, and place the laurels and palms of victory upon the head of the Redeemer, who is worthy of all honor, glory, dignity and majesty forever.

I have therefore had many trying scenes to pass through, not only in mind, but my body has not escaped violence.

But I forbear to say any more at present upon this unpleasant part of my subject. Suffice it to say, that the people who are trying to steal the name of Baptists, and who boast loudly of their great works in "the furtherance of the gospel," appear to be the most inveterate enemies of the truth. I have found many such in Indiana, Ohio and Virginia, where I have traveled; many who are *called* Baptists, but comparatively few who appear to be *chosen* Baptists. But I must not complain, for with those few I have had many comfortable seasons, for which I should continually thank my great Benefactor and Preserver; and not only for these, but for the manifestation of his kind, supporting hand in my much weakness and under all my trials, for "surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."

Yours in the bonds of love,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Remarks On Letter Of Dea. I. Sperry, On The Subject Of Means, &c.

New Castle, Henry Co., Ind., March 4, 1847.

BROTHER BEEBE: - It is high time that we present you our annual remittance for the SIGNS, and in so doing I will communicate to you, and (if you think this scribble worthy of a place in your columns) to the saints and faithful brethren scattered through the length and breadth of your correspondence, some of the trials, conflicts and joys to which we are made incident in this western valley.

It seems to me that the little flock in this part of the Lord's vineyard has need of the whole armor of God. The enemy "truly appears to have come in like a flood against the little company, being rigged out in hostile array with their carnal weapons, such as anger, malice, calumny, backbiting, smiting with the fist of wickedness, and falsehood, together with locks and keys, and nails and bars, to prevent us from attending our places of worship, and then guarding them with clubs and guns, and threatening to shoot us if we attempt to enter. Such are the means that some of *Means* Baptists [so-called] use in this country to accomplish their ends, and, if possible, to fulfill the general Arminian prophecy, which is, that the Old School Baptists will soon be extinct.

Truly we may say, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means." - Jer. v. 31. The Campbellites, Methodists and other Arminians are rejoicing that so many have left our ranks and come over to their sentiments. Some of them say they feel like taking them in their arms; others, that they now see nothing to prevent them from all uniting. I was told, not long since, by an intelligent Campbellite, that the Means Baptists in his neighborhood preached precisely the Campbellite doctrine. The general cry is, that there are but few of those old *hard-heads* left, and they will soon be out of the way. Think you, my brethren that it is a matter of discouragement to us thus to be grinned at, mocked and called few by these modern Ishmaelites? Nay. Let it remind us, of the days of Gideon, and of the language of the Captain of our Salvation. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." - Matt. vii. 13. And again, "Fear not, little flock," &c.- Luke xii. 32. The "remnant according to the election of grace" is safe, because "kept by the power of God." Though prowling wolves may range the forest, and greedy dogs infest the road, and hungry lions thirst for their blood, and false teachers crying, Lo here, and, Lo there, shall deceive many, and although we "are everywhere spoken against," and persecuted from place to place, let the wolves howl, the dogs bark, the lions roar, false teachers cry, evil speakers lie, and let persecution rage with a ten-fold vengeance, the little flock is forever secure; for the eternal God is her refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. We have a strong city: Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Watchmen, listen to this: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."- Psa. xlviii.12,13. Then stand upon her wall, as a faithful watchman; fear not the enemy's darts; "keep not silence," but "cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet;" but be certain to "put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." But be sure not to mistake the use of the sword, as the Means folks do; think not that it is to be the means or instrument of giving life to the dead. The weapons of our warfare are mighty, (through God) to pull down strong holds, and cast down imaginations. Fear not while you have that sword; it is a well-tempered, well-tried Jerusalem blade. One sweep of it, coming in contact with them, will dash in ten thousand atoms a thousand Arminian earthly weapons, so that not one that is formed against you shall prosper. Therefore use it well, wherever there is an enemy creeping round the walls of Zion. And when they have retreated, some to the New School, some to Campbell, and some to Means, and all is peace, and quietude, and fellowship, and brotherly love, and unity, as appears to be the case with us in this region now, then turn to the household of faith that has been engaged in the conflict, and refresh them with the bread of life that sustains, and the wine that makes glad their sinking spirits; for you will be certain to find them hungry, thirsty, weary and heavy laden. O what a rich banquet you have to set before them! What a rich treasure in poor, helpless, earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us!

How is it that it is in earthen vessels? Because Christ is in them. Then, should we be asked, Where are all those blessings, those inexhaustible riches? We answer, All, all treasured up in Christ, the great repository. Are we asked, What do they consist of? We answer, "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: but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Here then is deep, unfathomable love and grace; love centering upon its objects, chosen in Christ before the earth's foundations were laid, the sea spread forth, or the blue ethereal canopy hung over them; ere the gems of night decorated the stately covering, the moon exhibited her silver face, or the golden sun let fall his illuminating rays to gild and beautify the whole; ere man was formed of earth, and ere he fell, this love lay bountiful in the womb of eternity, embracing all its objects. And although he sinned in league with Satan against his Sovereign, and entailed death upon all his offspring, and though the poisonous, killing stream flowed upon all his progeny, so that a long list of black, unhallowed crimes have been, and will be perpetrated through all the lapse of ages, against the righteous law, and in the sight of God, yet heinous, aggravated and numerous as those sins have been, and may be, they have never been, nor will they ever be sufficient to stop the current or change the course of that love from its chosen, objects. O! Tell them of that love, and tell them that it changes not, and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed. Surely it is a rich repast when tasted by his hungry children. What wonders have been wrought in the exhibition of that love! The great Redeemer in consequence of it, bowed to visit this

abode of sin and misery, that he might bear the sins of all his people in his own body on the tree, and put them away by the sacrifice of himself. It is strong as death; for when the monster made his appearance in his most hideous form, when the sword of Justice could no longer slumber, when the weighty storm from Sinai's burning, trembling, smoking summit must break in fearful vengeance, his spotless soul was made the receptacle of all its deadly darts, to screen his guilty children from impending ruin. He died for their sins. But it was not possible that he should be holden of death. On the set time of Jehovah, the third morn, death and the grave must yield up their prey. He rose for their justification. He ascended on high, and is now exalted a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. What dainties are here for the craving appetites of his regenerated children! And yet all this has no more charms for the soul that is dead in sins, than a jewel has for swine. But the eye of faith beholds it, and feeds upon the rich repast. His children, by faith, eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, and have eternal life.

Christ is in them the hope of glory, and he is eternal life. Brother Beebe, I was about to close my poor communication, but the last number of the fourteenth volume of the SIGNS has come to hand, and in it I perceive another long communication from Dea. I. Sperry; and seeing him so entangled in an Arminian snare, I think it indispensably necessary for some one who has been an eye and ear witness to their (the Means folks) proceedings and doctrines here, to develop the matter a little for the relief, not only of brother S., but of all other Baptists that may be bewildered in the same labyrinths, notwithstanding the candid, scriptural and unanswerable reply that followed it.

In looking over the above named communication I have been made to ask, Is it possible that this is from the hand of brother S.? I can say with brother Ambrose, he has been to me a precious brother. For although we are situated far from each other, we have been acquainted for a number of years. He has been frequently at our church, and we were, always glad to see him. I have also had meeting at his house and at his meeting house. Often have we taken sweet counsel together, and seemed to rejoice in each others company. I now say to brother S., Dear brother, let me admonish you to retrospect every step, and mark well the distance you have rambled from the apostolic, or old Predestinarian Baptist track, before you proceed farther. Suffer a weakling to reason a moment with you upon this subject. We are perfectly safe while we have positive scripture language to support us in our argument; but when we go beyond that, all is uncertainty. We may confidently say, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth;" but when you say that he does it through men, or the gospel, either as means or instruments, you go beyond what is written, and should feel the force of your own admonition, "Be not wise above what is written." Who ever heard the scripture say anything about the Spirit going through one man to quicken another, or through or in his words either? What are words more than the vibration of the air upon the fleshly organs of speech, and by them so modulated as to be recognized by an intelligent mind as signs of ideas? The hearer must

be in possession of intelligent powers, otherwise the sound of words would be no more than the tinkling of a cymbal; and the eloquence of Demosthenes or Cicero would be wasted in the empty air, without minds capacitated to receive and understand it. Now the Lord created man with his natural faculties, and then addressed and taught those faculties in relation to natural things. Will any man in his common senses conclude that revelation or teaching had anything to do as a means or instrument through which man received his natural existence? Any child could solve the question. Did all or any of the laws, institutions, ceremonies or carnal ordinances that were imposed on the Jews literally, have anything to do as a means through or by which they were made Jews? Or were they first made and born living Jews, with mental powers, and then those revelations made to them as such? Again, words spoken by men as explicative of spiritual things have really no more spirit in them than words spoken on other matters. They are formed of the same air and modulated by the same fleshly organs of speech; and we are told positively with regard to this quickening, that, "The flesh profiteth nothing." What then constitutes the difference in the hearing? It is this; words spoken by one whose mind is under the influence of the Spirit are calculated to hold out correct signs of spiritual ideas; and those words, though spoken in the most animating strains of eloquence, would be wasted and lost unless the mind of the hearer is spiritually capacitated to receive them; for "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." Then, while natural men we receive not, nor can we know spiritual things. We must first be made spiritual; and that is accomplished by being "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," who is a Spirit, and in no other way.

There is then a spiritual revelation made in the gospel to a spiritual seed or generation, and to that generation exclusively. Not to *everybody indiscriminately*, for the very first clause in the New Testament contradicts that idea. It is: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ," and no others. Now, to suppose that spiritual revelation, either written or oral, has anything to do as a means through or by which these spiritual characters receive their spiritual existence, would be as vague and absurd as to conclude that any natural revelation made to man is the medium or means through which he has received his natural existence. *The gospel*, therefore, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, [not to unbelievers] to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." And why? "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith," &c. Faith then is the faculty by which we receive every spiritual blessing, or to which every spiritual revelation is made. It is peculiar to God's living children, and is therefore called "the faith of God's elect." And to those who have, not that receptacle, the preaching of Christ is a stumbling-block and foolishness.

The Means people here say that it is a small matter that we are disputing about; that it is *splitting hairs*. I cannot see that it has split any. It may be the means of dividing hair and bristles from wool, for the bristles have been very manifest in the investigation of the

difficulties that have existed amongst us; but they have been divided off, and the disposition of the lamb is now manifest amongst us, dressed in its native fleece, for which we desire to be very thankful, and I am made, for one, to see what a poor, short-sighted creature I am. All my exertion that I was master of was summoned up to prevent the storm that appeared to be gathering and blackening around us. I endeavored in my feeble way to expose the fallacy of the doctrine and enormity of the practice of the Means party. Some indeed who have gone off with them appeared fully to acquiesce with us in doctrinal sentiments, and who, if I am not a poor, deceived wretch, I love dearly for the truth's sake, and I have not yet found that we differ in doctrine; but it was their unhappy misfortune [as I think] to stand connected with others; for I believe all are connected in a natural relationship who stood with the Means party that went from our church, except one, who has appeared to be filled with jealousy for years, and determined if possible to rend the church, whose course I feel it my imperious duty to publish to the Old School Baptists, not because it is a pleasure to me, but to show them what kind of people they are uniting with when they follow the Means dreamers, and because they have from our church violently taken off the church records and refused even to grant us a transcript, thinking thereby, I suppose, to keep concealed their former acts, which have been too flagrant and outrageous to be imposed on the name of Baptists.

Now, as stated above, these people are ever crying out that it is a small matter that is dividing us; and yet, in consequence of it, they have, in the church to which I belong, declared non-fellowship with us, and vowed that the church must split. The clerk was taken under dealing for endeavoring to cause division in the church, and declared non-fellowship, and while his case was under investigation, left his seat abruptly, and forcibly taking with him the church-book, telling us that we should not meet there any more; and on being asked how he would prevent it, he said that he would fasten up the door, and if it was broken open there would be a lawsuit. The church proceeded to deal with, and exclude him for his conduct. A few of his connections met on the following morning (which was Sunday) and professed to restore him to fellowship, without giving the church any previous knowledge of their designs, and called themselves Lebanon Church. During the investigation, which had lasted for several meetings, while speaking, I was called by name and told in an angry tone that I must hush, by one of the same connection, who, after raging for a considerable time at the door, came into the house with an open knife in his hand, as I am told by those who requested him to shut it up; but he refused. This I got from those who talked with him, though I did not see it myself. I wish to be very particular in the statements I make, for this, should it be published will be critically examined, and every subterfuge resorted to, to seek an occasion against me; I therefore present it in a form that I am willing should be subjected to the closest criticism; yet the truth of the above statement need not be doubted. It is true that I paid but little attention to what the individual said or did, and should have paid less, had it not been for the confusion occasioned in the house, particularly on the part of the ladies, who had

previously had a proof of his character and temper; for on a former occasion, and while he had the name of a member in the church, I had been seized by him, and violently dragged from my seat in the meeting house, grasped in his arms with such force that several of my ribs were considerably injured, and then, endeavoring to thrust me out of the house, he was met by some of my friends who came to my relief. He, then struck at me probably two or three times with his fist, and, on being spoken to very calmly by one of them, he struck him with such force that the blood flowed freely from his forehead, and he would have fallen to the floor, in all probability, had not the seat prevented it.

The reader may have concluded by this time that this is *Means* with a vengeance. Well, on the last day of our difficulties, and while we were investigating the clerk's case, he and the most of his party had left the house; the church proceeded in their business, when an inquiry was made whether we should meet at the meeting house on the ensuing morning, or at a comfortable school house in the neighborhood. The most of the brethren had been so sickened at the scenes they had witnessed there, that they preferred repairing to the school house, believing that if they kept the house they must either defend themselves with carnal weapons or take their case before unbelievers, and they dared not do either. It was published that we would meet at the school house the next day, and that one of their preachers would preach at the meeting house. The next day we had a large congregation; they had but one individual. The neighbors were disgusted with their conduct. O may we be reconciled to bear joyfully the spoiling of our goods, rather than dwell in such confusion.

Since the storm has blown over we have lived in uninterrupted peace, and can witness "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Brother Beebe, (if I may claim relationship) I think that of all the beings that ever the Lord suffered to live upon his footstool, I have reason to be the most thankful not only for the numberless blessings which he has so lavishly heaped upon me, and with which each of my days has been continually crowned, notwithstanding all my unworthiness in his sight, and rebellion against his dignity, but for his restraining grace and preserving power also; for I think I can safely say that while undergoing the few little trials related above, the miserable *old man* was so curbed and kept down that his temper was not suffered to rise so as to be perceptible to myself or to any one present; and this I can only attribute to the care and keeping of my kind Shepherd.

Here we are, a few, (though a considerable majority of the church) that have not bowed at the shrine of the image MEANS. And after visiting and hearing from many of the churches in our association and corresponding associations, I rejoice to say that there is manifested more unanimity of sentiment, more brotherly love, more christian fellowship, in a word, more real health amongst them, than there has been for the last ten years. O that the Keeper of Israel may still enable us to *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

How wide the contrast when we turn our eyes the other way! Some of the *softs* as they are here called by their Arminian friends, extol brother S.'s letter very highly. Others say that it will not do, and that he had better quit writing. I think, myself, that there is danger of their losing by it, so long as there are Baptists among them. The multiplicity of opinions among them reminds me of the time when the children of men met on the plain in the land of Shinar to build the city or tower of Babel, and the Lord came down and confounded their language. One will contend for a principle with all the zeal of an exasperated scribe or pharisee. Anon, another, and not infrequently the same one, on a different occasion, will deny that anybody believes such an idea; so that there is scarcely an Arminian notion extant but what has advocates and opposers amongst them. Among the opposers of such sentiments, I think, are some of the lambs of Christ, who have probably rambled off with them in consequence of a natural relationship or some base misrepresentation; and in their capering, prancing, scampering and flouncing round they have kicked up such a dust that their eyes seem to be almost entirely blinded with it; hence they seem to be groping almost like a blind man for the wall. And well I know that there is but one Optician that can successfully operate upon them to clear the fog and mist from their eyes. O that he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness would shine in their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that they may not be looking for it in the faces, of men as *means* or *instruments*.

It is strange to hear them talk of splitting hairs, when from MYSTERY to MEANS they all have been, and are still contending for the very same tenet, which is, in substance, that there is a God at some local distance operating upon people through men who are his honored *vicars*, *vicegerents*, *means* or *instruments*; while the Old Baptists, from the apostles down to the present time, have uniformly and continually contended that the God of Israel shines and works in his children to will and to do of his good pleasure.

That he may there shine and work until he dispels all their gloomy clouds and subdues all things to himself, is the sincere prayer of an unworthy brother and companion in tribulation.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Isaiah 62:12; "The Holy People &c."

Near New Castle, Ind., Feb. 29, 1848.

"And they shall call them, The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." - Isa. lxii. 12.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I have delayed to forward our annual remittance, in order to see some brethren who live at a distance, and who, I supposed, would wish to read your interesting periodical. In sending our returns for the SIGNS I will subjoin the following remarks on the passage at the head of this article.

Probably our present condition as a church may have had some influence in directing my mind to this portion of the word. I would relate, for the information of brethren abroad, some of the circumstances of our case. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we humbly hope they are united to us in that relationship which will lead them to weep with us when we weep, and rejoice with us when we rejoice. I would prefer to lay before them some circumstances concerning us, rather than to give a full elucidation of the text.

In the commencement of the chapter, the special care of the Keeper of Zion is set forth, not only towards his chosen ones among the Jews, but in the second verse it is said, "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness;" and in the third it is said to the church, "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." However she may have appeared as one forsaken and in widowhood, in former times, the gospel epoch was approaching, when she should no more be termed forsaken, nor her land desolate; but she should be called Hephzibah, (my pleasure) and her land Beulah, (married) "for the Lord delighteth in thee." And farther, her sons should be united with her in wedlock, and her God should rejoice over her, as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride. And as the Lord knew that the enemies of his church would be incessantly creeping about her walls, by day and by night, to spy out her liberties, he assured her that he had set watchmen upon her walls that should not hold their peace day nor night. And he has commanded them not to keep silence. How often have these words occurred to my mind when I have seen the enemy lurking around the walls of Zion, and when I have heard the faithful watchmen lifting up their voices like a trumpet. And how has it grieved me to hear some of her inmates crying, "Don't fight," and to see some of them even draw their swords and bend their bows at the watchmen. Then I have thus reflected: Poor watchmen, ye are called to face the enemy in hostile array, with the Lord's "Shall not hold your peace" sounding in your ears, amidst thousands of poisoned darts which are hurled at you from without, and while valiantly wielding "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," contending with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places; worse than all, must ye receive repeated wounds from those whom ye regard as friends. Surely they need the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, and the whole armor of God. But hark! "The wicked have drawn out the sword, and bent the bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall return into their own heart, and their bow shall be broken." Again, "The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged." The Lord has, by his immutable oath, pledged himself to sustain her in the

courts of his holiness. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." "He has proclaimed unto the end of the world: say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy Salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him and his work before him."

"And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." How necessary that they should be a holy people; for without holiness none can see the Lord; and yet how impossible that they should make themselves so; for all their works, while dead in sin, are works of iniquity; and works of iniquity cannot produce holiness; neither is it accomplished by works of righteousness which they have done, nor in any other way than by the blood of Christ, which cleanseth them from all sin. He hath "by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified." This amply acquits them from all legal charges; for all the demands of the law are by this one offering forever canceled. It demands the life of his people, and he who is their Life was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. Justice cannot require that the debt which has been once fully paid should be paid again. Hence, "They shall be called, The redeemed of the Lord." Their redemption by the Lord is *prima facie* evidence of previous relationship, or ownership; for to redeem is to buy back persons or things which are sold or forfeited. Hence the expression by the prophet, "Ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed without money." And the apostle says, "Sold under sin." Hence the Redeemer "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." But they were not only sold under sin, but they were dead in sin; and hence the necessity of their being quickened, regenerated, made alive and born again. This quickening is not effected by or through men, or *means*, or *instruments*, or anything short of the Quickening Spirit. Neither are they born again *by*, *of* or *through* men, as means or instruments. "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "Born. again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." He is holy, and they that are born of him must necessarily be partakers of his holiness. Children must partake of the nature of their parents. They that are born of, or by, or through the plans, schemes and instruments of men, or through men as means or instruments, are children of hell; but "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." These are the holy people, the holy nation.

But she, the bride of Christ, shall be called, *Sought Out*. Can there be any doubt how this is effected? He has not said that he would send men, as means or instruments in this work, to seek her out; but he has said, Ezek. xxxiv. 11, "Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, so will I seek out my sheep," &c. And again, "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away." Again, "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and gather her that is driven out." - Micah iv. 6. See also Luke xix. 10. "For the Son of man is

come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Yes, lost, and in a waste howling wilderness, wandering upon the dreary mountains of sin, all like sheep gone astray, and trusting in the mountains of Samaria; blinded by the god of this world, in love with sin, in league with Satan, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, enemies to God, under the Satanic influence of the prince of the power of the air, in bondage under the elements of the world, delighting in the cords that bind them, without strength to break them; bound and in prison, and the doors fast shut, covered with gross darkness, with no human eye to pity, or hand to help.

But O what love, what wonder-working love and goodness is manifested by the kind Shepherd in seeking them out of this vortex of ruin! He finds them in the wilderness, and upon the mountains of sin, opens their eyes, breaks their league with Satan, makes them nigh by his blood, and friends instead of enemies; delivers them from the power of darkness, breaks the yoke of bondage and the cords of sin and unbelief, dispels the gloomy darkness, his all-seeing eye pities them, and his all-powerful arm is made bare (not clothed with means) in their deliverance and eternal salvation. But I had almost forgotten the object of this poor scribbling. They often need seeking out in another sense, for the old man is prone to wander among the swine. David says, Psalm cxix. 176 “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.” None of them are any better than David, but they must be “Sought out.” The good Shepherd never loses sight of them. No doubt, as we stated in a former communication, but some of the precious lambs were decoyed off by Meansism, who did not believe the heretical doctrines, for such is now proved to have been the fact. But some have already been “Sought out,” and brought home to the fold. But O! to hear them tell of their dreadful privation while wandering over the parched mountains, and of the severe chastisements they received, before they could yield so far as to return, has been almost enough to dissolve a heart of stone. But, you know, our Shepherd is so faithful that he will not let them go. “They shall return and come to Zion.” And O what joy have they and we realized at their return. Like real friends who have long been separated, the joy of meeting seems to have overbalanced all the grief that we endured as the consequence of our having been so cruelly torn asunder. Yes, there has been joy in heaven (the church) over one of these repenting ones, more than over ninety and nine just ones that need no repentance. O what thankfulness, what gratitude we owe to our kind Father, for his mercy endureth forever. For notwithstanding our proneness to wander in the dark, where we are wont to say, “The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me,” how consoling the reply of our heavenly Bridegroom, whose cheering voice is heard to respond, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that make thee waste shall go forth of thee.” Well may she be called, “Sought out, A city not forsaken.” His immutable word

hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Although she must pass through the waters, he will be with her, so that the rivers shall not overflow her, the fire shall not burn, nor the flames kindle upon her. The unbroken cords of eternal love shall bind her to him, so that she shall "hold on her way." His grace shall support, his bounty feed and clothe, and his power keep her, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Yea, Zion, we may sing concerning thee,

"As surely as he overcame,
And triumphed once for you,
So surely you that love his name,
Shall triumph in him too."

Brother Beebe, it is truly encouraging, and, I hope, deeply humiliating to us, to witness the Lord's kind dealing toward us, in view of all our unworthiness. Well we remember the cold, dreary and inclement storms that poured upon us their blighting and congealing torrents, until all our enjoyments were chilled, and we almost lifeless, when our harps hung dumb and silent on the willows, when scarce one melodious sound was heard to break the cold and midnight silence. The prowling beasts crept from their dens in fearful numbers, while their hideous howlings seemed ominous of a speedy destruction of all our comforts. Their frightful yells, together with the apparent barrenness of Zion, seemed to cause many of the precious lambs to retire in mournful solitude. While I, whom the brethren seemed to look upon as a watchman that the Lord had set upon her walls, would often stand in solemn meditation, and cast my eyes around, but could not behold another within twenty miles of me, in the service that they regarded as such. How often have I thought, Will I have to stand through life alone and contend against such fearful odds, in relation to numbers? My character traduced, my person abused, my enjoyments destroyed, and, worst of all, the cause that sometimes seemed to lay nearer my heart than all the rest, wounded, bleeding, and, to all human appearance, almost ready to expire. These thoughts at times have pressed so heavily upon me that I have often been driven to the solitary and silent grove, where, unseen and unheard by any save my God, I have endeavored to pour forth my wants and my woes before his gracious throne. My fervent prayer, I think, has, been at such times, that he would restore to me the joy of his salvation, preserve his children, build up the seemingly desolate walls of Zion, raise up and set faithful watchmen upon them that would declare all the counsel of God.

In contrasting our present situation and circumstances with the above described ones, I have been prompted to ask, Has he who is seated upon a matchless throne of eternal majesty and excellent glory, stooped to listen to the lisps of a worm, a sinful worm of the dust? If so, what thanks can I render for such signal mercy shown? Now, the furious tornadoes and the icy fetters seem to have yielded to the milder influence of the warmer breezes, and it looks like "the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear

on the earth, the time of singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.” Many of those who were hid in the solitude are showing themselves, and occasionally there is one added by baptism; and better still, if possible, to me, the Lord gave us a clear manifestation at our last meeting that he had called one of our brethren to the work of the ministry, one of tried veracity, established moral character, and sound in the faith. Brother Joshua L. Hickman, son of Eld. Joshua Hickman, (one of your former correspondents, who now rests from his labors) was accordingly liberated by the church to exercise his gift and we think that the prospect of his usefulness in his Master's vineyard is very flattering. O that Israel's God may sustain, and make him an able minister of the New Testament. In no part of my life have I witnessed so visible a display of divine interposition in the defense of Zion and her children as has been exhibited to us in this neighborhood.

It appears to me that Israel should take encouragement from these things, and remember when exposed to furious billows, howling tempests and dismal darkness, that the day and the night are all alike to the all-seeing, all-powerful and ever-present God, “who holds the water in the hollow of his hand, metes out heaven with the span, comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.” “Cry aloud and shout, O inhabitant of Zion; great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

“Hell from beneath may vent her spite,
And all her legions roar;
The world, the flesh and sin unite,
And concentrate their power.

Stronger is he that is in you,
Than he that's in the world;
His grace will bear you conqueror through,
His banner's still unfurled.

The gales of love shall waft you on,
O'er night's dark raging sea,
Till all the storms of night are gone,
And you in endless day.”

I transmit to you the above with all its imperfections, penned in haste; for it is now high time for me to start to meeting. I am well aware that it carries weakness and imperfection on its face, and therefore place it entirely at your disposal, and still hope to remain, although unworthy, your companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

Remarks On The Second Beast, &c.

At Home, Henry Co., Ind., Feb. 12, 1849.

BROTHER BEEBE: - Night enshrouds us with its sable mantle, my family are enjoying refreshing slumbers, the voice and bustle of the day has given place to silence; no discordant jargon grates on my ears, the ticking of my time-piece, measuring off the fleeting moments, alone is heard. After some reflection on the multiform movements of anti-christ in his wayward march, his subtle schemes and Satanic devices against the few that find the *strait gate* and *narrow way*, I have concluded (as the time for our annual remittance has come,) to resume my pen, and through the columns of our valuable little messenger, the SIGNS, try in my much weakness to make some humble returns to my brethren and sisters, who have heretofore laded so richly the columns of the SIGNS with freight so admirably adapted to solace the sorrowful minds of the scattered and tempest-tossed lambs of the flock, and of which I have frequently been an unworthy participant.

How dreary the season when the mantle of darkness is thrown over us! The innocent flocks and herds repair to their rest; and while reposing at ease, and locked in slumber, the ferocious beasts of the forest wantonly creep from their lairs, and with savage thirst seek eagerly the asylum of the unsuspecting fold. Now, winding through the dense forest, he makes his way to the farm-yard, and before the heedless flock are aware, he is in the midst of them, and soon they feel his merciless fangs. He spares neither the old, nor the young; his thirst for blood will not be satisfied with that of one; each taste seems but to sharpen his appetite, and he would fain exterminate the entire race. How necessary is the presence of the attentive shepherd, to rescue and protect the timid and defenseless flock. One is required who is not only acquainted with the weak, unarmed condition of the flock, but also with the sly, creeping and cunning craftiness of the wolf.

I mention the *wolf*, because the Lord has used this animal as a suitable figure to represent those characters which so frequently infest and howl around the little flock, and against it use sly, insidious and artful measures, employed for the purpose of exterminating them from the earth, and of raising up in their stead a worldly and lucrative establishment to bear the title of modern Benevolence, with the design to draw from their deluded followers and admirers their earnings, and of trampling the truth of God under their feet. The present is called an enlightened age; but alas; when we look around what multitudes we behold ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness. We may truly say, "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the

people." In this gloomy darkness, and from this dreary wilderness, how often do we witness the creeping forth of the enemy; how frequently have they crept in among us to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus; how seriously have we felt their fearful ravages, and what must have been our inevitable doom had it not been for the constant care of our ever watchful and faithful Shepherd. He never slumbers nor sleeps; and Israel may now say: "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me." Truly, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and are safe."

The movements of the enemy throughout Christendom present to the observing eye a spectacle, at all times and in all places, decidedly opposed to the manner in which Christ effects the salvation and instruction of his people. In the days of Christ and his apostles, life, with all its developments - such as seeing, hearing, feeling and understanding - were indispensable qualifications to enable man to realize his own character and condition as a rebellious, lost and helpless sinner, and also to make him acquainted with Christ as the necessary, able and only Savior. In those days it was taught that God communicated this life with all its consequences by revealing his Son in his people, according to Gal. i. 15,16: "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me," &c. And according to I John v. 6: "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Also 2 Cor. iv. 6: "For 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."

But in the visible rise of the first beast, according to D'Aubigne and other historians, "It began to be affirmed that salvation was conveyed by means of certain invented forms, and that none could obtain it without resorting to such MEANS." And also, "that Christ communicated to the apostles, and the apostles to the bishops, the unction of the Holy Spirit, and that this Spirit is found only in this order of communication." In the beginning it was taught that the Spirit of Christ was necessary to quicken and qualify his people for church membership; afterwards this order was inverted, and it was taught that none could receive the Spirit unless they became church members. It requires no *Argus* to perceive the object of the enemy in this course.

1. To inculcate the idea that the ministers were more than ordinary beings, and thereby enable them to exert a strong influence upon the populace.
2. To swell the number of church members.
3. To levy a tax upon the members thus multiplied that should bring into requisition pecuniary emolument, so that all the power of money (as it is said, money is power) might be wielded by anti-christ against the truth.

Learning was also seized upon; not for the purpose of elucidating the scriptures, but rather to explain away their native simplicity and usefulness to christians; to cover them with a sable mantle. Not to doctrinize, reprove, correct and instruct the man of God,

according to 2 Tim. iii. 16; but to terrify and coax into their church those which are without.

Who is there that cannot perceive an identity in the doctrine and practice of the ministry who labored in the ruse, and under the influence of the first beast, and those who are now laboring for the rise and progress, and under the influence of the second? Is not the same means doctrine taught, and for the same purpose of aggrandizing church members? Do we not see a tax levied on those members also? What eye so dim that it cannot perceive that the same exertions are made to idolize the ministry, the very same plans, and schemes, and ways, and means used for the acquisition of money, and that money to be used in the most artful and hidden way for the suppression and, if possible, extermination of the truth from the face of the earth.

When I speak of the *means* sentiment, I do not wish to be understood to have reference only to those who were once called Baptists, who have endorsed that heresy; they have only fallen into the ranks, and under the black flag that was hoisted by papal Rome, and which has had the support of every Arminian sect; or in other words, every daughter of Roman Catholicism, down to modern Mormonism. See what floods of fables float out from the Tract Society, which is sustained by the joint co-operation of all the daughters! With what zeal they labor in every town and village and school house, to turn away the ears of the people from the truth, that they may be turned to these fables. Scarcely a school-book can be obtained in the land, from the child's first book to the most profound treatise on the sciences, that is not corrupted and poisoned to subserve the same base designs of modern anti-christ; so that the infant minds, while incapable of resistance, may be fettered down in the darkness of superstition by the chains of error, allowed to hear no other sound than that of the clanking of their chains, until they by custom shall become, charmed and fascinated with them. Literature in its legitimate sphere is beautiful and cannot be too highly appreciated; but degraded, and forced into the service of anti-christ, it loses its charms; its use has been perverted to militate against the truth. What pains have been taken, and what exertions made, to "turn the truth of God into a lie." What great minds are pouring forth the floods of worldly wisdom, and laboring to misrepresent the true import of the testimony of God.

In the rise and progress of the first beast the civil authority was seen to bend, to bow down and kneel, and fall down before the shrine of popery. In the coming up of the second beast our once beloved government is seen already bending, and yielding a portion of its pecuniary power. We are informed that the second shall exercise all the power of the first beast; may we not anticipate the time when our civil institutions will be laid prostrate and powerless before the destroyer of the rights of mankind?

Do you, my brother, begin to despond, to feel some fearful forebodings, while witnessing the lofty strides of anti-christ? Fear not, for notwithstanding all their wily arts, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. "His mighty arm has gotten him the victory." His penetrating eye darts through the mists of blackness and darkness, for darkness and light

are alike to him. He sees the secret plans and movements and all the workings of the enemy; and in his own time he will cause them to wither as an herb, and their place shall become desolate. Though you must pass through fiery trials, you shall not be burned; though billows of trouble may swell like mountains, they shall not overwhelm you; for at his all powerful bidding they shall cease their commotion, and lie passive at his feet. The time of the reign of anti-christ is short; for at the time appointed shall her plagues come, in one day - death and mourning and famine - and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for "strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." The merchants who were made rich by her shall stand afar off, weeping and crying, Alas! alas! That great city that was clothed in fine linen and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour so great riches have come to naught. Like a great millstone cast into the sea with violence, shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down and be found no more.

Awful presages of the downfall of all earthly splendor are being constantly exhibited around us. Earthly potentates hurled from their crumbling thrones; their empires convulsed and shaken to their centers, tottering to their final fall. The mighty hand of God is in all this.

"Here he exalts neglected worms,
To sceptres and a crown!
And there the following page he turns,
And treads the monarch down."

But amidst all this catastrophe, this wreck of human greatness and anti-christian splendor, shall be seen, on,

"A little spot enclosed by grace,
Out of the world's wide wilderness,"

the church of the living God, singing anthems of everlasting triumph. They shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb that was slain, who has washed them and made them clean. He is their eternal Refuge, and his everlasting arm is underneath to bear them up: "He will help them, and that right early." Although they are in themselves weak, yet he is their Strength. They are ignorant, but he is their Wisdom. They were vile and sinful, but he is their Righteousness. They were in bondage, but he is their Redemption. They were scattered, but he is their dwelling place in all generations. They are disconsolate, but he is the theme of their joy; and at his right hand are pleasures forevermore. They are a little, feeble flock, but he is the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. They are poor, but he is their treasure; in him they have durable riches. They often wander, but he gathers them with his arm and carries them in his bosom. If they stumble, or even fall, they shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth them with his hand. He feeds them when

hungry, gives them drink when thirsty; he clothes them when naked, and heals them when wounded, and he cheers them when sorrowful. He is their eternal life amidst all their death. O what wonders has the mysterious workings of his mighty grace unfolded to their astonished vision! What matchless power to preserve, and stupendous wisdom to direct them! May they not with rapture exclaim, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints?"

Let the mystery of iniquity work on; our God maintains his throne and his eternal dominion. He holds the helm of universal government. He rideth on the heavens in the help of his people, and in his excellency on the sky. He looks upon the earth and it trembles. He touches the hills and they smoke. He is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgressions and sins; and he will by no means clear the guilty. He is mighty to save his people. Who that have tasted his mercy can forbear to praise him? How submissively should we lie at his feet in tribulation until his set time to deliver us. What resignation should we feel to his will while called to endure those light afflictions which are but for a moment. How calmly should we recline on his breast, while the merciless storms are raging upon us. In our afflictions let this be our motto, "Thy will be done." But a little while and all the rude blasts will be overblown. What troubles, trials, disappointments, privations, persecutions, doubts, fears and temptations have the saints had to endure in all ages of the world; and yet none were so heavy but that the grace given them was sufficient for their support. Truly we may say with David, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." And again, "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in time of trouble; and the Lord shall help them and deliver them." He shall deliver them because they trust in him. What a multitude of exceeding great and precious promises are spread over the sacred pages for the consolation of Israel. The theme sublime, and the prospect grand, no pen can describe, nor tongue proclaim the one-half. Should all the saints on earth unite and swell their loudest notes until the sound should reach the upper courts, and should the glorified saints reverberate the song until it should reach back again to earth, and should their united voices harmoniously swell their highest notes until the end of time, the theme would demand a loftier and eternal song, a song that should employ undying myriads in everlasting bliss. Then let the saints dwell upon the theme, and while we continue on earth may our lives be devoted to the praise of him who wears the crown. And when our earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved, may he raise up our children and our children's children to praise him in our room. He certainly will preserve a few on the earth so long as the earth remains, to perpetuate his praise. And when he shall have accomplished all his work of grace upon this his footstool, he will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God. Then shall be developed in awful majesty the justice of the fearful, final and irrevocable doom of anti-christ. Earth, that has been the theatre of her diabolical developments, shall no longer bear her up; the seas over

which she has waved her black flag shall no more waft her freighted treasures of merchandise over their briny billows from nation to nation. But whither shall she flee? Vainly shall she call on rocks and mountains to fall on her and hide her from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. At his appearance the crash of warring elements, the universal throes of expiring nations will rock the earth, and cause the pillars to shake, while the whole fabric shall tremble and flee away, and be dissolved in awful conflagration. What consternation shall seize the anti-christians, when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. But even then shall the saints raise their tuneful voices above the catastrophe, for their redemption shall be near at hand. Behold with transport of joy your King, ye saints, arrayed in robes of majesty, with his heavenly train, when summoned by the trump of God; they shall hear his soul-cheering commission, "Gather my saints together unto me." "Behold I come quickly." The bride, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, shall respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen." But O, shall we who are now groaning, being burdened, unite and mingle with the celestial throng, and swell the chorus of the eternal song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings?" Transporting thought! To exchange the mouldering urn for the company of Christ and his celestial retinue; to be caught up in the air, and so be ever with the Lord.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Controversy In The Signs Of The Times.

Home, Near New Castle, Ind., June 12, 1850.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - I have seen and heard much respecting the "controversy" that has been for some time past, and is yet to some extent, conducted through the SIGNS, and it has received no small share of my attention. Having until now tried to content myself with being a silent looker on, listener and meditator upon the subject, I feel disposed to say something through your columns relating to it.

I will say, however, in the first place, lest I be misapprehended in the remarks I may make, that I am no way disposed to oppose a spirit of calm investigation and inquiry after the truth. I am pleased to see (whenever circumstances require it) all contend earnestly for it. And it is fully known by all who have been acquainted with my public course for years past, that whenever error has made its appearance among the Baptists, or has borne

a threatening aspect so to do, it has been my uniform course to handle it "without mittens," or in other words, to "cry aloud, spare not." But above all, I abhor to see a disposition among the professed "Old School Baptists" to compromise with Arminians. And from the tender regard that some who have written in the SIGNS seem to feel for them, from their anxiety that they should be let alone in all their sophistry in trying to bewilder the children of God, in order that our congregations may be enlarged, that we may become more popular, or that the offense of the cross may cease, and from the fact that some seem disposed to change their manner of preaching to please men or gain their applause; when I consider all this, together with other things of which I am advised from other sources, I shall not be surprised if I hear of a matrimonial amalgamation taking place between some who have heretofore flourished as Old School Baptists, and the New School Babel builders.

But pardon this digression, and permit me to return to the object that I had in view when commencing this communication, the "controversy." In doing this, my highest aim is to contribute to the peace and welfare of that perplexed, "poor and afflicted people" that is "everywhere spoken against." I say perplexed, because there does appear to me to be an unusual degree of perplexity amongst them. With anxiety I ask the question, Whence has it originated? Not from the gospel, not from its divine and sublime Author, nor from his Spirit; for his fruit is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," &c., and it must be acknowledged that the reverse of these has been manifest in many instances. Is it not to be feared, then, that the primitive rise of all this intricacy has been with the enemy of all righteousness? If this be the fact, he has had no doubt a medium through which to operate. And what is this medium? Not the "new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;" then it must be the old man which is corrupt, the "flesh that lusteth against the spirit."

Dear brethren, let us all consider in these trying times that we are all encumbered with a "body of sin and death;" let us consider the frailty of our carnal nature, and the consequent imperfection with which our lives abound; and let us try to exercise all that christian forbearance, to cultivate all that brotherly kindness, to indulge in all that tenderness, and to exhibit all that forgiveness that is so necessary for the peace, quietude and fellowship of the dejected lambs of the good Shepherd. Notwithstanding all that has been said through the SIGNS, from the pulpit, and in the more private circles respecting the "controversy," and however applicable to the investigation under consideration, and although a term used in the scriptures, it does not in this case sound very agreeable in my ear; because the word controversy signifies "a quarrel," as well as a dispute. Then, if the expression is fitly applied to the case, is it not necessary, and is it not high time, too, that each one who has hitherto been engaged in it should commence (if it is not already commenced) a strict self-examination? And while under this self-inspection, solemnly to consider the weighty sentence of the Judge of the quick and dead, "for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." Matt. xviii. 7.

Dear brethren, let me ask in (what I hope at least to be) the spirit of love, brotherly kindness and humility, Have not offenses been manifest, has not the love of many waxed cold, and has not iniquity therefore abounded to a considerable extent? Look around you and see if you cannot discover many of the disconsolate children with their heads bowed down like bulrushes, many more engaged in a heated controversy, many withdrawing their patronage from the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, who are thereby deprived of the comfort and instruction that we all have so sensibly felt and so often expressed in perusing them, and consequently weakening the hands of our brother, who has, under the providential care of a beneficent Protector, so long, and in the face of so many trying circumstances, so ably and so profitably conducted the medium through which we correspond; not because of a candid, faithful and brotherly investigation of the points of difference existing among the brethren, but because of an agitated controversy in which we fear (and pardon us if our fears are groundless) that the "old man" too largely participates. Let each one interrogate himself as follows: Has there not been a spirit secretly lurking within me that is repugnant to the one that was so frequently manifested by him whom I should delight to imitate and follow through evil and good report? If so, has not that spirit given rise to feelings unbecoming a follower of him who is "meek and lowly in heart?" Has not that spirit and feeling prompted me to use language that was calculated to cultivate in the breast of my brother a similar spirit? And has not retaliation been the inevitable consequence? And has not each response from such a source furnished additional fuel to the fire already kindled? Has not this kind of a spirit been communicated, cultivated and caught from breast to breast, until like a fire in the forest it has produced a conflagration that is calculated with grief and astonishment to extort the cry, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth?" Has not this fire where it has raged produced a dazzling, bewildering glare, rather than the exhibition of the pure, calm and unsullied light of the gospel? Has it not had an effect similar to that of the fire in the forest? Has it not been succeeded by a blighting, withering influence rather than a growth of the plants? And have there not, therefore, arisen fogs of smoke therefrom, calculated to mystify, bewilder and puzzle the minds of the "little children," rather than to illuminate their understanding, edify and build them up in their most holy faith?

Brethren, may not these things contribute in no small degree to the languid, dejected and enfeebled appearance of the church at the present time? If so, O let us be upon our guard, and very careful how we conduct controversy. Again, let it be remembered that man is an aspirant, and that there is a possibility at least of pushing our investigation upon the important points that have been discussed in the SIGNS beyond commendable limits, by indulging too much in an unjustifiable inquisitiveness, and endeavoring to explore unrevealed regions; or in other words, by striving to be "wise above what is written," however conscientious we be in our researches after the truth. And as we must all acknowledge our liability to err in relation to what is revealed and written, nay, as we must agree that we are prone to err in many of those things, and when past experience

proves to us that we have erred, and that too in our honest views of matters, can we be too careful how we indulge in speculations upon a subject that is fraught with mystery incomprehensible by mortal powers, inaccessible to mortal thought? Although I can see at times a discrepancy in the views of the brethren, when taking their communications singly; yet, to embody the whole, and extract therefrom "the bone of contention," I do acknowledge to be more than I can do. This, however, is no matter of surprise, when the dimness of my vision and my native imbecility are taken under consideration. But the matter of astonishment with me is the fact that they seem not to understand each other. For notwithstanding one may with all the talent he possesses, all the precision that he is master of, delineate, point out and explain his ideas, when the response comes to hand misapplications, misapprehensions, misconstructions, and misrepresentations are complained of; and those complaints appear to be common on both sides. What can be the cause of all this misunderstanding? We know that these brethren are intelligent and instructing in other matters; we do not wish to harbor an idea that they willfully misconstrue, willfully misrepresent each other. Far be it from us to entertain a thought that they are in the possession of a principle so unbecoming brethren, so repugnant to the spirit of Christianity.

Will you then, brethren, force us to the conclusion that you do not understand yourselves? Well, what then? Should you urge us to this point, our inquisitive minds cannot rest here; we are assured that it is not because you are deficient in capacity, nor because you have not had opportunities of improvement. It therefore cannot proceed from a lack of intelligence. Then what can be the most rational conclusion for us to draw in this case? Must we not conclude that it is because you are endeavoring to explain matters that the Lord has not been pleased to reveal, and that consequently lie hid from us in awful shades of darkness, (see Psalm. xviii. 11) or enveloped in the lucid brilliancy of uncreated light, impenetrable by human thought, inexplicable by human intelligence, incomprehensible by human capacity, even when aided by all the revelation that an all-wise God has been pleased to make to us, while acting in a sphere where we are to know but in part? May we all let what an inspired apostle has declared to be "without controversy" a great mystery, remain a mystery without "controversy."

Do not conclude from these remarks, brethren, that we are disposed to condemn all that we cannot comprehend; for I for one am free to acknowledge my inferiority to my brethren in point of natural and acquired ability, and that things may appear clear and plain to their eagle eyes, which my dim vision cannot scan. And could they see "eye to eye," we might think it more safe to receive and embrace their opinions. But while it is intimated by them that one is contending for the doctrine of Polytheism, another for that of Arminianism, &c., we cannot conscientiously receive any idea unless we have "thus saith the Lord" for it. And when we have this testimony, although it may be contrary to our former notions, we should receive and embrace it with becoming reverence, and esteem it above every selfish or secular consideration. If on the other hand we should find

the same weight of testimony against it, down with it, cast it "to the moles and to the bats," let it take its doom with all other things that are to "perish with the using." Again, if we find among the sentiments of our brethren one that we can neither justify nor condemn, let it remain in the peaceable possession of him who contends for it, until it pleases the searcher of hearts and the revealer of secrets to make it manifest. One thing, however, is a matter of encouragement to me, and that is the fact that the object of the brethren on both sides appears to be to exalt the Savior in the estimation of them all. All use the same texts to effect this grand object. This is indeed a superlative object. We never can err in extolling him too highly; he is a "plant of renown," all honor, praise, majesty and glory is due to him. But whether the brethren are pursuing the best course "to show forth the praise of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," we leave them to judge.

Permit me, dear brethren, to observe one thing more before dismissing this part of the subject. You probably think, each one of you, that you have been wronged, and this may be the case. But remember, you should not think of taking each other by the throat and demanding full payment. If every wrong is to be fully redressed, where then will be the necessity of that forgiving disposition that is so indispensably requisite while we are encumbered with "a body of sin and death," and so frequently enforced and inculcated by the LAWGIVER of Israel, and by his apostles? Now, brethren, though I feel sensible of my weakness, inadequate to advise, and unworthy of a place even at the feet of the saints, let me exhort you to love, bear with and forgive one another, as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

Brother Beebe, permit me before sticking up my poor pen, to say a few things to the brethren about the Fort Mountains, in the Rappahannock Association, and in all other places where "the controversy," or any other controversy, has raged, is raging or may hereafter rage.

Dear brethren, I am now considerably advanced in my fiftieth year; and although younger no doubt than many of you, it has been my lot to pass through many (of what I thought to be, at least,) severe trials. And among other things, it has been my painful lot to see those who labored in word and doctrine, and whom I loved and esteemed for the work's sake, involved in disputings and other difficulties. I have seen it the case, too, that there has been manifested too much of the disposition that prevailed at a certain time among the brethren about Corinth, when contentions got among them; and to my great grief and mortification I have seen those who I did believe loved the Savior and each other, cruelly torn asunder, and many of them made to wander in solitude, dejected, cast down and afflicted, deprived of enjoying the privilege that the kind Shepherd has so graciously bestowed upon the sheep of his pasture, in congregating them together in a church capacity, where they could unite in company in ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving, in mingling their voices in singing "with melody in their hearts to the Lord," the Author of all their enjoyments; bereft, too, of the more private or family

circles of the saints, where in mutual converse they could recount their joys and sorrows, their temptations and deliverances, their doubts and assurances, their despondency and hope, their sins and evidences of pardon, and the various other cares and comforts of this life, which conversations were so well calculated to sweeten the bitter pangs, alleviate the burdens, quell the fears, revive the hopes - in short, to bestrew with flowrets and with fruits the rugged and thorny path that lies before us, and that we must inevitably pass while wending our way over these barren wastes to the celestial city. May the God of grace and mercy forbid, brethren, that it should be thus with you. Be assured that one who wishes you, grace, mercy and peace, and one who has known what it was to mourn over such desolating scenes, hopes better things of you. As it was said on a former occasion by one, I am of Paul, by another, I of Apollos, by a third, I of Cephas; let it not be said by one of you, I am of Gilbert, by another, I of Samuel, and by a third, I of John, &c. Remember that Christ is not divided, neither should "his body" be; he alone was crucified for you, to him you are indebted for your standing, for a name and a place in his house, which is better than that of sons and daughters. Although Paul and Barnabas contended so sharply that they "departed asunder one from the other," and although others may do so likewise, it certainly does not follow as a matter of necessity that those who are under the most solemn obligations to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" and who should under the most trying circumstances be "knit together in love," should rend asunder the dearest ties that unite them in their social intercourse, and thereby become aliens, and even enemies, to each other. Then we repeat, may God forbid that this should be your unhappy situation, merely because your preachers whom you esteem, and whom you should love for the truth's sake, are involved in contention.

It has given me pain to hear it expressed that a refusal, on the part of brother Beebe, to publish certain things in the SIGNS, would be likely to cause greater divisions than otherwise. In the name of peace, brethren, do such things as this constitute a sufficient warrant for those who are bound by such sacred ties to rend them? Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. - 2 Samuel i. 20. May we all consider that the "little flock," the "few" that enter in at the "strait gate," have enemies in abundance, without making enemies of each other. Think not that they are asleep; nay, they are ever on the alert, always ready to exhibit a belligerent aspect toward us. Their poisoned arrows are always on hand whenever an opening appears through which they can discharge them. Then, dear brethren, may we all stand clad in heaven's nobler panoply, (see Eph. vi. 11-16) and then we may bid defiance to all their rage of war. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

Brethren, farewell; live in peace, and may the God of love and peace be with you.

J.F. JOHNSON.

Religious Doings In The West.

Henry County, Ind., Sept. 30, 1851.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I embrace this opportunity of saying to my brethren who have so frequently written to me, (and thereby greatly strengthened and comforted me) that I desire sincerely to thank my God and them for the enjoyment of such privileges, but must acknowledge myself far in the rear. I will, however, say, by way of apology, that my close confinement to business at home, (in building a dwelling house) together with my engagements abroad, have more than ordinarily hurried me through the preceding part of the present year. I hope therefore to receive your and their pardon for my backwardness. I hope, my brethren, that none of you will conclude that my delay in writing has proceeded from a lack of respect or christian regard. In the foregoing remarks, I wish to be understood to include all my dear brethren and sisters with whom I have had correspondence, both through the columns of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and privately.

Brother Beebe seems to request, at the close of my last communication in the SIGNS, that I should write oftener. I would, with all freedom, brother Beebe, but when I look over my productions and compare them with those of my brethren and sisters, they seem so lean, tedious and awkward, that I feel ashamed of them. I remind myself of a young bird when first setting out from its nest; it goes flopping and wobbling through the air, without knowing where it is going, and when stopped, where it has been.

Having thus far wasted time and paper in a good degree, I will proceed to make a few remarks in relation to some of the religious doings in our western region. Religion is a term much used in our western country; but when used, it requires a special qualification or explanation in order to a fair understanding of it. For it is applied to sentiments and practices as perfectly antagonistical to each other as light and darkness, love and hatred, sin and holiness. Is the question asked, why it is that one word brings to view such conflicting sentiments and actions? We answer, Because it is of two kinds. One is "pure and undefiled," and prompts to actions and sentiments like itself; the other is said to be, (by an apostle) "our religion," and (consequently) "vain," and therefore prompts to all the superstitions, persecutions and vain sentiments and actions of which the human heart, influenced by the enemy of all righteousness, is capable of conceiving or bringing into requisition against that which is pure and undefiled. This being the case, those two religions differing as they do, in sentiments, actions, aims and ends, must ever stand necessarily belligerent to each other. They have their different places of origin, too. One is from above, and prompts its subjects to extol its author, believe his word, obey his commandments, keep his ordinances, in short, to believe and practice all that is amiable, all that is divine. The other is from beneath, and influences its subjects to reverence its

author, believe his (lying) words, obey his commandments, attend to his witchcrafts, and to practice all that is earthy, sensual and devilish. The subjects of those two religions constitute two different kingdoms; one the kingdom of Christ, the other the kingdom of anti-christ. One bears the characteristic appellation of a unit, (Song vi. 9) and has one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. The other is significantly characterized a multitude, (Rev. xiii. 18) and has "lords many," many faiths, and several baptisms. One is represented comparatively as a "little flock," (Luke xii. 32) traveling in a "narrow way," and but "few," [Matt. vii. 14] and also are said to be "an afflicted and poor people," trusting in the name of the Lord." - Zeph. iii. 12. The other requires a broad way to travel in, and are represented as being "many," (Matt. vii.) and as "trusting in their wealth, and boasting themselves in the multitude of their riches." - Psalm xlix. 6. They are trying very laboriously to redeem their brethren, and give to God a ransom for them. But David says, in the seventh verse of the forty-ninth Psalm, that none of them can by any means do it; and yet the silly dupes will be incessantly trying, (as they say) and continually begging, and even gambling, for money for that professed purpose.

A large proportion of the religion of our country at the present day may with propriety be termed, "our religion." Money and works constitute the very life and soul of it. The Corresponding Secretary of the Indiana Baptist (falsely called) General Association, in filling the minutes of that branch of anti-christ, held at Logansport last September, says, [page 29,] "We hope our brethren will please remember that our principal dependence is upon the village subscription to carry on our missionary operations as a board. Brethren, be prompt, like good businessmen, in bringing tithes into the store-house of the Lord." We commend him for speaking the truth this one time. We believe it is their principal dependence. But should we not pity the dupes who have no better dependence? And of course they have no better, as that is their principal one. And then it is enough to shock the senses of a christian, to think of the presumption and downright wickedness of those sons of Belial, in pretending that the Lord's "store-house" is to be filled with their ill-gotten filthy lucre.

It has been but a few years since the Indianapolis Association, when a few of the Old School Baptists were about to leave them, denied, in the most positive terms, being missionaries. But now they are increased by compassing the land and making proselytes, till they can "trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;" and nothing appears to be more desirous with them than to see those who contend for the truth swept from the face of the earth, that they may have the better opportunity to wring from their deluded followers their hard earnings, and thereby pamper a set of hypocritical demagogues, and have none to expose their base schemes of swindling. In the same minutes it is said, Page 43, "The anti-mission spirit, is doomed to extinction. May its death be hastened, and its struggle short, though severe, and even desperate." Two things are clearly exhibited in the foregoing extracts. 1st. A principal dependence upon filthy lucre. 2nd. An inveterate hatred to the spirit that trusts in the living God, which they are

pleased to call anti-mission. But what better can we expect to find in earthly schemes, concocted by earthly men of corrupt minds, to gratify an insatiable earthly appetite for gain, which they think is godliness? Those were the distinguishing marks of their mother, (Rev. xvii. 5) and in vain may we look for anything better in her daughters. But for the laws of our country that protect us, that same disposition that prays for the destruction of the spirit that influences the Lord's children to oppose those diabolical measures, carried on under a cloak of religion, our land would be drenched with the blood of the saints. It is hard even to imagine the lengths to which a zeal for "our religion" will lead its advocates. It breaks every curb, and unlocks every avenue to the most malignant passions of carnal nature. It annihilates every vestige of humility, and puffs up the possessor with self-conceit and bigotry. It sweeps from the bosom every beacon of light, and enshrouds the mind in the grossest darkness. It destroys every regard for the truth, and clogs the heart with the basest falsehood. It bars the intellect against every principle of love, and fetters it fast in the most malignant hatred. It prompts individuals to spurn the commandments of God, and begets in them a reverence for the commandments of men. It steels the heart against every principle of holiness, and cultivates every species of ungodliness. It defies the power of saving grace, and causes its advocates to depend principally on money, works, &c. It would sap the foundation of civil and religious liberty, and build up in lieu thereof a religious aristocracy, intolerant as Mohammedanism and cruel as Paganism. It would raze the very foundation and consign to destruction and oblivion the kingdom of Christ, and "compass land and sea to make proselytes" for the building up of the kingdom of anti-christ. But a glance at the history of the past and the present time will clearly show that these are some of the characteristics that have in every age distinguished the wayward march of those who have been under the influence of a worldly religion, or drunken with the wine of the fornication of the Mother of Harlots. It has been their common course, while their numbers were sufficient to carry out their designs, to make great pretensions to benevolence, charity, and a voluntary show of humility; to make fair speeches, and use smooth words; to resort to every species of trickery, every sly, creeping and insinuating measure, for the purpose of swelling their numbers and enhancing their worldly emoluments, until they have gained their desired summit, and then down goes every opposition. Every other earthly power must coil at their impious feet. Kings have been dethroned and kingdoms subjected, the inalienable rights of men have been relentlessly torn from them, and whole nations bathed in blood.

Of all denominations in the United States, none are more conspicuous than the New School Baptists in exhibiting a starting point to those enormities. What species of crime has not been perpetrated under this kind of a cloak? Those who have visited our western aborigines can testify to the fruits of modern missionism, by witnessing the number of half-bloods that inhabit the different tribes where there have been missionary locations, and which the natives boast of as being "half missionary." How disgusting to morality, how shocking to humanity, how reproachful to the name of Christianity it is, to see those

who carry that sacred profession upon their infamous tongues, thus scandalize and abuse it. Can we not here see, dressed in the most sable hues, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like," all perpetrated by "men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness. From such [O my soul] withdraw thyself."

How wide the contrast when we turn our attention to the effects of that religion which is "pure and undefiled before God." The apostle gives this brief description of it: "To visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, [not to get their money, nor prostitute them] and to keep himself unspotted from the world." It is peculiar to the kingdom or subjects of Christ, and is accompanied with a commendable submission, and a becoming reverence to his will in all things. It is a principle of holiness, and has its origin in the fountain of purity - in the ocean of holiness. It causes old things to pass away, and all things to become new. It blunts the affection and desires for earthly aggrandizement, and sets them on things above. It portrays the blighting tendency of all sublunary things, and develops riches and blessings durable as eternity. It throws a necessary restraint over our vile passions, and teaches us to bear all things patiently. It exercises a withering influence over self-conceit and intolerant bigotry, and settles us submissively in the vale of humility. The sable shades and gloomy darkness is driven from the mind by the lucid radiance of eternal light, which unfolds to view both the sinful propensity of our carnal nature, and the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It ransacks and razes from the mind the love of falsehood, and fills it with the love of the truth as it is in Jesus. It destroys in us an undue hatred even to our worst enemies, and fills us with the "love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." It fills us with reverence and obedience to the commandments of our God, and enables us by grace divine to trample under our feet the commandments of men in matters of religion. It teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and fills us with holiness as God is holy. It enables us to realize the riches and power of divine grace, and prostrates every dependence upon money, works or anything short of God our Savior. It buries in our inmost intellects a profound reverence for a Deliverer who proclaims liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and who "breaks every yoke and lets the oppressed go free." It also works in us a desire that the blessings of civil and religious liberty should be extended to all men. It makes us rejoice in the fixed, steadfast and eternal "foundation of the apostles and prophets," upon which the kingdom of Christ is built, and convinces us of the sandy foundation upon which rests the kingdom of anti-christ, and that when the rust eats up their gold and silver, and moth consumes their paper, and their works are no longer available, they must inevitably meet their final overthrow and eternal downfall, as sure as the prediction of God is true, who has sealed her everlasting destiny and declared it by his word. Thus by works "our religion" is obtained, by works its short duration is sustained, and by works it falls. O how the

children of light should extol the power of reigning grace in their salvation. While their enemies have nothing better than their own exertions and withering treasures to depend upon, all-competent grace begins the work of their religion in their hearts, all-sufficient grace perpetuates and sustains it there, and all-conquering grace supplies the topstone, completes the finishing, or, in other words, crowns the whole in a final and eternally triumphant victory, "with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." Fear not then their numbers or their wealth. Both afford us sure testimonials that they are the brazen-faced bantlings of their ancient mother, who was first typically portrayed by the tower of Babel, then by ancient Babylon with her golden head, and afterwards anti-typically illustrated by the splendid appearance of the old lady with her myriads of numbers and millions of money, who is called, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS," &c.

The bladder-headed creatures, too, pretend to have scripture to support their plan of beggary, such as the following: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Paul spoke that to the "Elders," not to his brethren, nor to the world, to filch their living from them; for he said on the same occasion, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel," which they dare not say, or, if they do, everybody knows that they tell a lie. And again, for the purpose of systematizing their schemes, they try to press into their service I Cor. xvi. 2. But that was a request of the apostle in behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem, and not for swindlers and beggars that they might consume it upon their lusts. As soon might we expect to find a frozen ocean in Africa, a boiling one in Greenland, grapes on thorns, figs on thistles, those hypocrites in heaven, or christians in final torment, as to think of finding the marks of the church of Christ in those dens of fashionable religion of our day. Turn to the apostolic church and ask, Who were their Reverends, Right Reverends, double D.'s, &c.? Who constituted their Missionary Board? Who were its officers? Who their treasurers? Where were their funds kept? Where were their Theological Seminaries located, and who of their gospel preachers were prepared for the ministry there? Where their Sunday Schools, and who their teachers? Where, when and who was it that conducted their Judas pockets round their assemblies, to gratify that "covetousness which is idolatry," so plainly discovered in those money-whining mendicants? They talk about covetousness to those from whom they beg! Why, it is as plain as open day that the term applies accurately to themselves. Covetousness consists in eagerness for gain, or craving what belongs to others. "Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's." It is vanity for them to think of finding scriptural authority for their doctrines or practice. If they wish to read their genealogy, let them search their mother's records. There they may find it, and precedents, too, plenteously.

But probably I have said enough on this subject. I hope that none will conclude that the foregoing remarks relative to our enemy have been penned under the influence of an indignant spirit. Why then write them? says one. Because I do believe that some of my

Father's children are at times decoyed off by those deceivers, to wander in that dark domain. If it were not so, why should he say, "Come out of her, my people?"

Dear brethren, be not discouraged at the appearance of the lowering clouds that now darken our hemisphere, but remember that you have been warned of these things in the scriptures, and "be separate" from all this silly trickery and bewildering glare of false doctrine that now disgraces our beloved country, and threatens the destruction of our dearest earthly privileges, all of which exhibit the coming in of the enemy like a flood, or uprising of the second beast; but "the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard." Rally to it, brethren, and "stand fast" under his all-conquering banner, clad with the "whole armor of God;" and thus equipped, you must, you will, and by the grace of God you shall certainly prove invincible at last, for the LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH.

"As surely as he overcame,
And triumphed once for you,
So surely you that love his name,
Shall triumph in him too."

Roaring lions; ravening wolves, raging tempests, rolling billows, chilling winds, scorching fires, hissing serpents, venomous vipers, every element, every enemy, must finally bow to the sovereign sceptre of the King of saints. He has no rival! His veracity, his word, yea his oath is pledged for your eternal salvation. His work has, and will sustain his dignity, in crowning you eventually in ultimate and victorious triumph. Then yours should be, and will be, to "show forth the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Remember that, brethren; that should constitute your good works; it is your best work, and therefore will be your eternal employment; and the nearer you can approximate to that while here, the nearer you will be right. Meet often together when practicable; and when met, let all your works praise him. Be kind and tenderhearted towards each other. And when we are deprived of assembling together, and are separated far asunder, let our united voices ascend to the throne of grace for the peace and prosperity of Zion. Be patient under all your tribulations. "Resignation sweeteneth the cup, but impatience dasheth it with vinegar."

Yours affectionately,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Visit To Kentucky.

New Castle, Henry Co., Ind., June 20, 1852.

BROTHER BEEBE: - Having arrived at home from a tour of meetings in Kentucky, in company with brother McQuery, I now, in compliance with the request of many brethren, inform them that I returned on Friday, the 25th inst., (having been gone just four weeks) in good health, finding all well. Brother McQuery reached home on Wednesday before, finding his family enjoying tolerable health. Saturday and Sunday following my return being our meeting days at home, we were comforted together with a very pleasant interview, where peace and harmony smiled in our midst. And now, being for the first time disengaged from company, I am made to reflect upon the incessant goodness and mercy of the indulgent God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in protecting, preserving, sustaining, comforting and consoling his children in the midst of dangers, apostasies, despairings, sorrowing and weakness, and exclaim with the psalmist, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever." It is both encouraging and consoling to me to find my Father's children "standing fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ has made free," notwithstanding the "untiring effort" of the daughters of anti-christ with all their counterfeit, feigned and falsely called benevolence, to entangle them again in the yoke of bondage. Having heard many, very many conflicting reports respecting some of the brethren of the Licking Association, Ky., we were induced to pay them a visit, in compliance with a promise given some eight months ago to some of her members, with whom I had formed a short acquaintance, with a sincere desire, I hope, at least, to arrive at the truth or untruth of many things that came to my ears concerning them. I endeavored to go untrammelled with prejudice. Well, after the closest examination that I, with my limited capacity, could give their doctrine and their order, I think I can confidently say that I found them "walking in the truth," contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, standing in the way, seeking and asking for the old paths and walking therein. Justice to those misrepresented brethren, as well as to myself seems to call upon me for such an expression. It is a matter of notoriety that difficulties have existed to an alarming extent between the brethren of the Licking Association and some others who went out from them, and still claim the name of Old School Baptists. But it is to be feared [I would fain hope otherwise] that those difficulties found their mainspring in jealousy and envy, which have seemed to lead some to take up the war-club against those primary and fundamental points of doctrine, the actual, absolute and unconditional election of the saints before time, and consequently against the everlasting oneness of Christ and the church. But we find another bone of contention there. Some of those absentees contend that the old, Adamic man is the subject of the new birth, and therefore raise a hue and cry about the christian warfare. Now, I do think that the experience of every christian must afford him conclusive testimony in this case, if they are not bewitched or greatly bewildered.

If it should not satisfy us, let us bow with due submission and a becoming reverence to the voice of revelation. On the one hand, we are told that the old man is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and, of a law in our members warring against the law of

our mind. "The flesh [that which is born of the flesh] lusteth against the spirit, [that which is born of the Spirit] and the spirit against the flesh," &c. And on the other hand, that "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."

But to investigate those points was not the object of this communication, having a more pleasant object in view, which is to inform the saints of the sameness of the teaching of God in all parts of the world. Our communications in Kentucky were principally with the Old School Baptists of the Licking Association. Inasmuch as our personal acquaintance with those brethren was very limited, and taking into consideration the variety of reports we had heard respecting them, we of course knew not what kind of reception we should meet with; but professing to know nothing of God or godliness beyond what he had taught us by his Spirit and in his word, our desire was to enter humbly, but fearlessly, so far as man was concerned, upon our mission; to keep back nothing that was profitable, and shun not to declare all the counsel of God; in short, to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear. Neither were we very solicitous to please those who would not be pleased with the truth. It is a pleasing consideration, however with us, that if there was a dissenting voice or discordant note respecting any item of doctrine, so far as those Baptists are concerned, we have yet to find it out. More than our highest anticipations were realized in finding the brethren and sisters all of one heart and one mind. Besides, it is extremely humiliating to me, in view of all my unworthiness, to reflect upon the repeated testimonials afforded me that I could participate in a fellowship so dear. Here permit us to render our hearty acknowledgements to the brethren, sisters and friends for the special regard and liberality manifested toward us.

Never have I performed a more pleasant journey, or had more satisfactory evidences that all the Lord's children are taught of him. Surely it was evident to us that the God of the Baptists in Kentucky is the God of the Baptists in Indiana - is the God of the Baptists everywhere. I think I have been made to realize the apostle's observation, who says, "We are bound to give thanks always 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." And although our different localities are far distant from each other, if I do not bear them in my affections it must be because of imbecility of my affections, and not for want of worthiness on their part. When I consider the special regard that they seemed to manifest for the truth, and for each other, I feel like exhorting them, with all the dear saints, to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." In conclusion, dear brethren, permit me to observe, that although our personal interviews are much restricted in consequence of our different, and from each other distant locations,

let us rejoice in, and often embrace the privilege of presenting our united petitions to the throne of grace, for the unanimity, peace, prosperity and lasting fellowship of all the beloved saints. Brethren, farewell; love each other, live in peace, serve the Lord in newness of heart, and may the God of love and peace preserve you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight. I remain your unworthy servant and brother in tribulation, if worthy of the appellation.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Admonition: "Prove All Things; Hold Fast That Which Is Good."

Henry Co., Ind., Feb. 15, 1853.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." I Thes.5:21.

BROTHER BEEBE: - The present state of Zion seems in my view to call for a strict adherence to the foregoing and other similar texts of scripture. There does, it is true, appear to be a disposition among the Old School Baptists to "prove all things" pertaining to their doctrine and practice; and I, for one, am well pleased to see them thus disposed. We may rest assured that the truth will never lack testimony in the word of God to substantiate it. There is therefore no danger in subjecting it to the closest criticism.

We are here in an imperfect state, and liable to imbibe notions or opinions, from traditions or otherwise, that are antagonistical to the truth, and hence the necessity of subjecting our whole theory to the closest scriptural examination.

Could we properly consider this at all times, we should not be displeased with our brethren when they call upon us to prove our position, for we are commanded to "prove all things;" nor when they attempt to point out our errors, for they too are commanded likewise. We are probably more tenacious respecting our religious sentiments than any others, and often have need of taxing our patience when they are opposed. James exhorted his brethren to "let patience have her perfect work." Impatience has ever been a fruitful source of evil among the saints, and the idea is forcibly impressed upon my mind that many of the evils that have afflicted Zion in by-gone days and at the present time have found their mainspring in impatience, while the religious sentiments of contending parties were under investigation.

But it is due to the advocates of the truth to say that they generally exhibit the greatest degree of patience under such circumstances. When individuals become impatient, get out of temper, and use harsh language when their sentiments are attacked, it seems to indicate a lack of proof on their part to sustain their position. Those who are conscious that they are right, never should betray a disposition to evade proof, nor impatience when it is demanded. Facts are stubborn things; the truth can never suffer under investigation.

In its onward march it will bear down all opposition, cut its way through legions of enemies, and achieve a final and triumphant victory at last. As well might we attempt to stop the lava that boils from Etna or Vesuvius with a puff-ball, as to suppress it. It must and will prevail, and all attempts to stop its progress or prevent its triumph must eventually fail. Then surely if we have the truth, proved to be such by the word of the Lord, we should "run with patience the race set before us." If then we are commanded to "prove all things," and to "let patience have her perfect work," and if we pay a due regard to those injunctions, we need not apprehend any danger to the SIGNS from a strict investigation of doctrinal sentiments among Old School Baptists, whenever conflicting sentiments are found in the camp.

Indeed, I think that a contrary course would be more likely to prove their downfall, at least with the lovers of the truth so far as my acquaintance extends. What Old School Baptist would be willing to support the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, if he should learn that the editor would not publish anything that did not meet his views? Or, on the other hand, who amongst us would wish to sustain a periodical that would publish the sentiments of all its correspondents, and yet suffer none of them to be converted? I hope that the Old School Baptists will never hand down such a record to their posterity.

Brother Beebe, after premising the foregoing considerations, I feel disposed to pen a few remarks in reply to some of the brethren who have propounded so many interrogatories to you respecting a remark found in the Warwick Circular; and this I will do in the spirit of meekness and brotherly kindness, if I am capable of writing in such a spirit. For my own part, I never should have discovered anything wrong in the expression, the "life of the church died when Jesus was crucified." However, I am not to conclude necessarily that the sight of my more eagle-eyed brethren will stop where my dim vision ends. But it may not be amiss to remark here, that we should be careful not to strain our optics so far as to behold objects where they do not exist, lest we subject ourselves to the same difficulty that the old bachelor did when the ladies, to try his eyesight, handed him a needle, requesting him to thread it. After a long and fruitless exertion of the visionary organs, he remarked that he could see the eye, but could not get the thread through; when lo; it had no eye.

Now I think it an incontrovertible fact, that if the law ever required the life of the church, and did not get that life, it will have it yet. For, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." I think this to be an item of vast importance in our faith. To me, at least, it appears to be one of vital interest; for if the law did not receive at the hand of Christ Jesus all that it required of me, a helpless sinner, my case is a lost one without remedy. I do not recollect that one of the querists, from brother Williams to brother West, the last, has given his views as to what life was laid down by Christ, and I think that we should require no further exposition on the part of brother Beebe than we are willing to risk on our own. Neither do I think that we can consistently find fault with a brother's idea on a subject unless we have a different

one. And if we have, a different one, and one that we may prefer, we should in no wise withhold it from our brother.

I wish here to make a few remarks upon a communication found in the third number of the present volume of the SIGNS, over the signature of brother C. West, of Illinois. And I think I can in sincerity adopt the language of brother West in his outset, and "hope that he will have grace given him to bear with my weakness, and that I shall have grace to enable me to write in that kind and brotherly manner in which everyone ought to write when addressing brethren," &c. So far as his logical criticism is concerned, I think it very well replied to by brother Beebe, and shall therefore pass it. The first expression that I shall notice in his communication is the following: "I understand that when the life withdrew from Jesus he died; and when it returned to him again he arose from the dead." What life withdrew? And who died? Does not brother West believe with brother Beebe, that Jesus is God? And if so, does he not subject himself to the same logical criticism that he uses against brother Beebe? We may glean from his argument the negative of the death of the eternal life of the church, but where is his affirmative as to what or who died? He then introduces the text in 1 Cor. xv. 22: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." And it is upon his illustration of this text, and the one directly following, quoted from 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, that I crave the liberty of differing with him. Now I think that if brother West could feel assured, as he may feel, that I have no wish to wound his feelings, nor to strive for the mastery, or anything else, but to arrive at a true interpretation of the scriptures, he would not think hard of me; I hope he will not. In his exposition of the first text quoted he says, "If the children of God or seed of Christ all died in Adam, how could they die again, being already dead?" In the first place, I have not the most distant idea that Paul in that text had any allusion to a death in sin. His prime object in this connection appears to be to establish in the minds of his brethren the doctrine of the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, which some of his brethren seem to have denied. See verse 12th. He does not therefore say, "As in Adam all died," but uses the verb *die* in the present tense, to show a continuation at the present time of their literal or corporeal death. We are not to be understood as denying or even doubting the well-authenticated fact that the entire posterity of Adam became involved in sin and death by virtue of their relation to and standing in him.

But brother West asks the question, "How could they die again, being already dead?" In his query he seems not to have recollected the necessity of distinguishing between a death in sin or under the law, and a death to sin and to the law. Now the fact of their being dead in sin and under the law, presents the great reason to me why it was so indispensably necessary that they should become "dead to the law by the body of Christ," "dead unto sin and alive unto God." So the apostle has it, and here we will make a liberal quotation from Rom. vi: "How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was

raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead (not dead in sin, nor under the law, but to sin and to the law) is freed from sin. Now if we be dead (to sin, to the law) with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This may suffice for a solution of the question, "How could they die again, being already dead?" But to the other text used by brother West: "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." He understands the expression, "if one died for all, then were all dead," to mean that they were all dead before he died for them. I am at a loss to know how we are to arrive at the conclusion that so the apostle meant, unless he had expressed such an idea. Let us notice the expression, read slow: "If one died for all, then were all dead."

He uses the adverb *then*, which signifies literally, at that time, or, perhaps we might render it here, in that particular case, all were dead; inasmuch as he was the embodiment of their life. I think that if brother West will notice the meaning applied to the word *then* by our lexicographers, he cannot retain the idea he has advanced on the text. Surely the word *then* cannot mean before.

And now, dear brother, if I have written one word that is calculated to wound your feelings in the smallest degree, I hope you will forgive me. Surely I have not designed to do so. In the preceding remarks I have asked the questions: What life withdrew? And who died? There appears to me no difficulty in arriving at a correct answer to these interrogations, if we conclude that the Savior is and was both God and man. And I suppose that none, will deny that fact, as both titles are so frequently applied to him in the scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New. We ask, Who transgressed the law? Answer: Man. Whose life then did the law require? The life of man. Surely a righteous law would not require the life of God for the sin of man. Here the question might be asked, Would not the life or lives of some good man or men of this world have answered the demands of the law? By no means; "There is none good, no, not one." And consequently a righteous, holy law could not be satisfied by an offering that was contaminated in the smallest degree. And therefore, could the blood of all the fallen race that ever did or ever will appear on the footstool of Jehovah have flowed in streamlets from every vein to form one vast ocean, all must have been forever contemned. For all had sinned in their Adamic head, and become guilty before God.

Then it must be the life of a sinless, perfect, holy man that the law required. Who is he? Should the eyes of thousands of my brethren fall on this question, they will probably

all be ready to give the same answer. The angel tells it in the following language: "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Let us look for a moment at the typical portrait of this character, as drawn by "holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." See Ex. xii. 5 - Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. Again, xiii. 12: Every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast, the males shall be the Lord's.

We might refer to many other similar texts, but these may suffice for the present. We notice two things in this class of texts particularly. First, the offerings were to consist of the firstlings, older ones of the flock; and secondly, they were to be males without blemish. How well calculated to illustrate Jesus, the "elder Brother" of the brotherhood, the "Holy One of God." He is the "first born of every creature," the only begotten of the Father, and his younger brethren the children of God in him and by him. And thus there is and ever has existed a oneness of relationship between him and them. Our elder Brother was appointed heir of all things, and his younger brethren are joint heirs with him. He is also appointed Mediator (executor) of the new and better will or covenant, set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was. When the deed was done, the law of his Father violated, its withering curse ready to fall in dire destruction upon his younger brethren, who had justly incurred its penalty by a fatal union with and a frightful fall in their earthly head, he stood ready to meet the awful emergency, and by a legal imputation to bear their sins and carry their sorrows, and thereby relieve them of their burden, he enchained them in the arms of love immutable, and as an eagle fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, so he bear them and carried them all the days of old.

Although we all like sheep have gone astray, turned every one to his own way, yet by a legal imputation, predicated upon an unbroken and everlasting relationship, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." And although countless myriads of crimson sins, committed by his brethren, in all succeeding ages swell in magnitude the unhallowed score, and exhibit in ominous lines the awful responsibility under which he rests, he stands in pompous majesty and determined purpose, to meet the same impending storm and liquidate the law's entire claim. Time, in her steady flight upon her well-fledged wings, is hastening the day, speeding the hour when the cry of justice will be heard to make the imperious demand; but ere it arrives, lo; he comes, heralded by a heavenly messenger, who proclaimed his advent and his all-glorious mission in the heart-thrilling, hope-inspiring, never-to-be-forgotten language: "He shall save his people from their sins." As he was the standing Mediator or Executor of his Father's will, the law of course must make its appeal to him, not to the minor heirs. He came therefore to do his Father's will, to meet the demands of the law from first to last, and become its fulfilling end. Its blighting curse was not to fall on one that the Father had committed to his care, but "every one" was to have everlasting life, and be raised up at the last day. But the day of payment arrives, and where do we find him? A fugitive eloping from justice? No, never!

"I am he; if you seek me, let these go their way." The lowering heavens and gathering tempests breaking from Sinai's threatening summit, seem only to nerve him for the fatal contest. He becomes his own herald, and proclaims, "the hour is come." He not only announces the epoch, but summons, on the other hand, his and our enemies, "Now is your hour, and the power of darkness," that they may marshal all their fiendish forces to the impending conflict. The victory must be completely triumphal, "He must reign" over all. Now the fated moment arrives when the Lord of hosts, to inflexible justice, cries, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." Thus telling in the legible letters - M-A-N - what life was to be exposed to the stroke of justice. If we wish to know what life withdrew, and what one was abandoned and forsaken to expire on the cross, hear ye from the lips of him who cannot lie, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Adam, when he transgressed the law, was not a spiritual, but a natural man; and consequently did not, nor could he forfeit the spiritual or eternal life of the saints; and therefore the law never required, and thanks to our God, it never got that life. It never can; it is beyond the reach of death, "hid with Christ in God;" yea, "preserved in Jesus Christ." Then, man had sinned and man must die. Well, what is it to die? Do any of us conclude that to die is to pass into a state of nonentity? True, the body in that case becomes for a time divested of all vitality; but does the life die in that sense? Butterworth says, Death is the separation of the soul from the body. The question has been asked, "What life died?" And it has been said, "It could not be eternal life when it was dead." Do we conclude that our life dies when our bodies do; or that it returns to God that gave it? I think the latter. So I think it was with Christ. But says one, What are your thoughts in the case? Well, my brother, listen a little further: "When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit, and having said this, he gave up the Ghost."

Surely then we cannot conclude that that Ghost, Spirit or Life went into a state of non-existence, but that it was commended into the hands of God until the appointed morning when his body was reanimated by its presence, and consequently raised from the dead by the mighty power of God. Thus the firstling of the flock, the Lamb of God, our great peace offering, was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. Having taken on him the entire seed of Abraham, he redeemed them from all iniquity; not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. So far as their spiritual or eternal life is concerned, no mortal ever possessed it until after regeneration; or in other words, until Christ gives them eternal life, the object of which seems to be that they might know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. It is then, and not till then, that we receive the record that God hath given us eternal life, and that life is in his Son. He therefore that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not (eternal) life. Then it is that the great mystery is developed that has been hid from ages and from generations, but is

now made manifest to the 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.

But I have wandered far, very far beyond my anticipated limits when I commenced this scribble, and must conclude by making a very few remarks on the closing part of the text, "Hold fast that which is good."

Here let me remark, that our judgments are so ruined by the fall, that we have but poor conceptions of what is really good, only as we, are taught by the light of the Spirit in the word of God. We should therefore search the record that God has given us, and by searching that record we find there is none good but God. He then is the great and only source of all goodness; and it pleased the Father that in him (Christ) all fullness should dwell. Let us therefore, without under-taking here to particularize on good things separately, recommend to all the dear saints to "hold fast to Jesus Christ," and then we hold fast to all that is good. And that he may give us grace to let no other trust intrude upon our minds, but to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, is the sincere prayer of a very unworthy brother in deep tribulation, and I hope in the fellowship of the gospel.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Obituary Of Wife And Twin Children.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - In the midst of severe bereavements and deep tribulation I send you the following obituary notice for publication in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES:

Our little twin sons, whom we called JACKEY and WILLE, to distinguish them, (we did not consider them permanently named, but talked of calling them Gilbert Beebe and Wilson Thompson) were taken from our embraces, the latter on the 23rd day of December, 1852, aged 19 months and 5 days, and the former on the 17th day of January, 1853, who lacked one day of being 20 months old.

At that interesting age, when their glowing powers of communication and action fascinated each member of the family, the chilling hand of death was laid upon them, and a deep gloom consequently overspread the entire family circle. Ah, brother Beebe, they were invaluable jewels to us, probably too much idolized; but the lovely little flowers have withered, and we confidently hope to bloom eternally in a healthier, holier, happier clime.

But alas! The stern monster death could not stop here. He stalked off with his victims for a time, to receive and return for a heavier mission. Their mother, CATHARINE C. JOHNSON, the companion of my bosom, the partner of my cares, and the solace of

upwards of twenty-seven of my past years, was made the next object of his ravages. She appeared at first to bear the loss of her jewels with a becoming christian fortitude; but the recollection of their charms seemed to call back the endearing ties of a fond mother's heart to such a degree that I began seriously to fear the consequences. A heavy and almost continual gloom hung over her mind, until the deep wounds of a tender mother were depicted in her countenance. In this situation she was attacked with the mumps, which so affected her head that her mind seemed partially to lose its balance, and all the gloom of despair appeared to take possession of it, and for three weeks or upwards her sufferings were extreme. Dear brother, I had often thought before this that I had severe trials to encounter for one so weak and ill able to bear them as I was; but these exceeded all the rest. I was often made to wonder why she was left for so long a time to mourn the absence of her Savior and the apparent loss of all hope. I had known her from her infancy, and often thought that her life approximated as near to innocence as was possible for an inhabitant of this polluted world.

Yet, notwithstanding this, about the commencement of the year 1830, she was enabled by grace to see herself a lost and helpless sinner, and finally to find her righteousness to be in the Savior of sinners, who spoke to her in the consoling language of the poet, "When through the deep waters I call thee to go," &c.; and on the 4th Saturday in June, 1830, with myself and three others, related her experience to the church, and was baptized on the following day as a member of Lebanon Church, in Henry Co., Ind., in which church she remained a worthy member until she was removed from the militant to the church triumphant.

It is a consoling reflection that the twenty-seven years in which our interests have been one were marked with peace and unity. Indeed, her virtue, meekness and amiableness were such, that no one worthy of the name of a husband could live otherwise with her. O what a loss, and what a solace, too, to consider that in the twenty-three years (nearly) that have measured our pilgrimage our minds have been one; so that in the means and all other difficulties through which we have been called to pass, if there has been a conflicting sentiment between us on any important item of doctrine, I have never found it out. And there is not a remaining doubt with me but that she had the confidence and fellowship of all the numerous Old School Baptists with whom she was acquainted.

She was born in Monongalia Co., Va., on the 31st day of March, 1812, the daughter of John and Mary Ann Wellett, married on the 1st day of March, 1827, and deceased on the 3rd day of May, 1853.

She has left to lament our bereft condition myself and nine children, five sons and four daughters; the youngest a son a little over six years old, a mother, (who is a subscriber for the SIGNS) four brothers and three sisters, (one a Mrs. Harvey, a reader of the SIGNS, in California) with a numerous train of relatives, and very many friends. Although she viewed herself without hope and forsaken of her Savior during the greater part of her affliction, the scene was happily changed ere her sun went down. After we had concluded

that her powers of speech were entirely gone, raising her hands, she exclaimed, "O my heavenly Father, my dear Redeemer, come and take me to thyself! Now I know that thou canst make a dying bed soft. O come quickly, and take me from this wretched state. I know that where thou art there is plenteous redemption. Now I remember the words thou spakest to me a long time ago:

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow.
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

The principal part of her conversation after this was pleading with her Savior to come and take her home. She talked with him as though she beheld him face to face, expressed a full resignation to his will, and seemed to rejoice at the prospect before her. She informed us that at his first appearance, the Savior came almost to her, and seemed to raise her up until her bed felt soft. At one time, after pleading with her Lord to come and relieve her, she remarked, "He can do without means; he wants none of that mixture." Thus the Lord in his infinite goodness not only sustained his handmaid in the trying hour, but for the consolation of us, her surviving friends, ratified his immutable promise never to leave nor forsake his children.

Brother Beebe, I hope that you and all the dear brethren and sisterhood who may read this will join with me in thanks to the Lord for the support afforded thus far under our privation, and pray for the exhibition of his grace to sustain us onward.

Brother Beebe, if it is not intruding too much upon your patience, please give the following lines of poetry, which I have composed on the death of my companion and two little boys, (twins) a place in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

My Catharine and two little jewels have left us;
O may we her pious example maintain.
The messenger, death, armed with power, has bereft us,
And rent our family circle in twain.

They've left us; but ah, 'twas their all-wise Creator;
The kind hand that gave them has borne them to rest.
They've hied to the arms of their great Mediator,
To bask in his smiles and recline on his breast.

Away from this world, high on love's pinions bounded,
Far, far from its toilings, its care and its woe;
Enraptured with bliss and with glory surrounded,

Forever released from their sufferings below.

O Lord, thou art merciful; grant us submission,
For thine is the right both to give and to take.
In this sad bereavement O hear our petition,
And grant us relief for Emanuel's sake.

The billows of trouble, the tide of emotion,
Must calmly subside at thy soothing command;
There are healing supplies in love's bounteous ocean,
The boon of submission is strewn from thy hand.

Weep not, for their Savior is mighty, he's glorious,
By him was the monster bereft of his sting;
He suffered, he died, rose, and now reigns victorious,
That all his redeemed should his victory sing.

Rejoice, for their spirits have gone to adore him,
Who saved them by grace and then called them to come,
And join in his praise with the myriads before them,
And hail all their following relatives home,

To range in the mansions all gilded with glory,
To feast on the fullness of infinite love,
To swell the sweet song and rehearse the glad story,
Of Jesus' salvation forever above.

O death, dost thou boast of thy wide devastation?
Thy terror is banished, thy sting is destroyed;
The Savior proclaims an eternal salvation,
From sin and from death to a heaven enjoyed.

O grave, though thy gloom their remains has enshrouded,
The triumph o'er thee is already complete;
They'll rise and be borne to the regions unclouded,
To greet, their Deliverer and sing thy defeat.

There is infinite bliss, there is heart-thrilling pleasure,
There's glory and grace in a lasting abode;
There life, love and bliss in an unwasting treasure,

Eternally flow from the fullness of God.

Your friend and brother in tribulation,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Visit In Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania & Virginia.

Henry County, Ind., Feb. 4, 1854.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - The restless wings of time have numbered with the past another year, and we are therefore admonished to renew our subscription for the SIGNS. In so doing, I will briefly state that during the past fall I was engaged in a considerable tour of traveling and trying to preach the gospel of my Master's kingdom; and in passing through parts of Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia, I was solicited by many brethren to give through the SIGNS a sketch of my journeyings and some of the circumstances connected therewith. I have delayed until now, and have not complied with those requests, until some of the brethren have renewed them by private letters. As an apology for my non-compliance, I will say first, that since my return a considerable portion of the time has been spent from home, amongst the churches in our own state; secondly, whilst at home and disengaged from the association of my friends and brethren, Caesar's demands have engaged my attention to a considerable extent; and last, but not least, a consciousness on my own part of my feeble and sluggish powers to either speak or write to the profit or edification of the saints. But that I may not be tedious in my apology, I will observe that previous to my departure I visited White Water Association, which commenced on Friday before the second Saturday in August, 1853, and then Lebanon Association, commencing the Friday following.

At the former, there were many preachers from different parts of the country, (the number not recollected) where the gospel was preached, I think, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," without any jargon. At the last named association, (home) I believe there were over twenty preaching brethren, and the preaching of the same kind. The same degree of unity and concord prevailed in the deliberations of both meetings. They were numerously attended with attentive hearers. On the 31st day of August, I set out on my contemplated journey, accompanied with a number of my brethren and friends, for the Conn's Creek Association, which convened with the Conn's Creek Church, Shelby Co., Ind., on Friday before the first Saturday in September. Here, too, we met quite a number of the laborers in the Master's vineyard, where the cause of truth was vindicated before a large audience of unusually attentive hearers. From thence I proceeded on my journey for the Licking Association, in Kentucky, accompanied by Eld. J. W. Thomas

and others, and after attending some meetings on the way, reached the association on the second Saturday in September, where we again met many of the heralds of the cross, and for three days had a most charming interview. After attending those four meetings, I was made to conclude that the heart of a christian must be hard indeed that could feel no emotion of joy, no sense of gratitude, on witnessing such scenes of harmony, such a perfect unanimity of sentiment, where peace, fellowship and concord seemed to reign, and love abound.

I heard many preachers and much preaching at those four associations, and I think I can confidently say that I never saw so much harmony at four successive ones in my life. I do not recollect that there was one conflicting sentiment advanced during the meetings. I will here ask the dear brethren,

"From whence does this union arise,
That hatred is conquered by love?
It fastens our souls in such ties,
That nature nor time can't remove."

Can it be from a spirit of error? O no. That produces schisms, contentions, strife, divisions, every evil work. Dear brethren, may these "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" be long remembered and happily appreciated by us all, and may each of our hearts feel the liveliest sensation of thankfulness and the deepest of gratitude to the God of all grace and all consolation, for his unspeakable blessings thus richly dispensed to us from the liberality of his redundancy. Surely these tokens of his divine favor and tender mercy call loudly upon us for solemn praises and incessant thanksgivings.

After the close of the association, which was held with the Goshen Church, Anderson Co., Ky., we proceeded on to Keene, had meetings, and from thence to Lexington, where, and in the vicinity of which, we spent several days very agreeably with brethren and friends, had a pleasant meeting with the church at Bryans, and from there continued our journey, visiting several churches between that and the Ohio River, crossed at Cincinnati on Saturday, the 24th of September, after spending two weeks in Kentucky with the churches, brethren and friends, in the most agreeable manner, and forming many new acquaintances, whose memory I still cherish with delight. After leaving Cincinnati we visited Mill Creek Church in Ohio, when my very heart seemed to recoil within me while I listened to the heart-chilling intelligence of the feuds and animosities that blasted like a withering mildew the heavenly union, the sweet fellowship, the social intercourse and soul-cheering amity of the dear saints who formerly composed that venerable body, the Miami Association. At her last session the relentless foe was suffered to "dash her cup with vinegar," or drench her with the bitter waters of "Marah," the sickening effects of which were now visibly portrayed among the hapless children of our heavenly Father.

Truly this was like running against an iceberg, when compared with the scenes of harmony that had characterized our journey hitherto. I need not here conceal the notorious fact that it was from this quarter that the everlasting union of Christ and the church was opposed through the Columns of the SIGNS, when so many of its able advocates, with their Bible in their hands, and its truth in their hearts, rushed up to the rescue of that soul-comforting principle. May not the opposition to this truth be the predisposing, the proximate, or the legitimate cause of the anti-union that now prevails to so alarming an extent, with its heart-rending consequences, among the dear but downcast and downtrodden saints there? If so, how careful we should be to take heed to ourselves and to the doctrine we advocate. Truly a fearful responsibility rests upon us in those respects. How often, while in the bounds of that association, did I ponder in my mind the text, "For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Dear brethren, let us all endeavor to take the warning, and remember that, "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets [teachers] that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him." - See Micah iii. 5, and the two following verses. In visiting many of the churches of that association, I was thoroughly convinced that there was an error amongst the Lord's people, and that they erred by disregarding the seasonable warning given them in the first chapter and twelfth verse of First Corinthians. O that we all could "cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils," repair to, and know "the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." May the Lord, in the plenitude of his grace and mercy, dispel the gloomy clouds that darken and make so dreary the horizon of the saints there, hush the howling and merciless tempests that are tossing them upon the billows of tribulation, and inspire them with love to his name, his cause, his truth, and to each other, that the sweet messenger of peace may again smile in their midst, and inspire them with love, and constrain them to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I do believe that the brethren of Miami Association, generally, constitute a body of Baptists of the old order, so far as their faith is concerned, and therefore greatly desire that they should cultivate a love for each other, a spirit of forbearance, and a reverence for the truth as it is in Jesus.

After leaving the bounds of Miami Association I visited one church in the Mad River, and then proceeded on my way, visiting a number of churches in the Scioto and Muskingum Associations. Here I thought I could perceive a change for the better; yet I cannot say that the causes and effects of the difficulties below exert no influence here. But I found many able advocates for the truth in the bounds of those associations, both men and women earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and who, I humbly hope, will exert their best faculties in the service, and sincerely pray to the God of grace for the prosperity of Zion, and that the unhallowed bane of contention and the reckless ravages of the enemy may not be suffered to blight the hopes, spoil the peace, or mar the fellowship of the careworn children of the kingdom. I would fain advise and

warn them to stand steadily upon their watch-tower, as we all should do; but I feel my weakness, and consequent incompetency to direct myself aright. I thank my God, however, (if I am not deceived) that we are sufficiently advised and warned by those who are greatly my superiors, and O that we could give sufficient heed to their advice. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them, which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." - Rom. xvi. 17,18.

I had the pleasure of forming many new acquaintances in the bounds of those associations, also the recollection of whom I still cherish with pleasing sensations. I hope not to be forgotten by them when at the throne of grace. Unworthy as I feel of participating in the privileges and enjoying the fellowship of the saints, I am sometimes made to thank God and take courage for those inestimable blessings, and for the manifestations of his divine presence, and the power of his sustaining and reigning grace in supporting me while passing through the scenes of deep tribulation that have lately been my lot to witness, in wending my way through this (to me) lonely valley of tears. Where would I find enjoyment, if deprived of the society of the saints?

I reached and filled my last appointment in Ohio, on the 13th of October, at Timber Run Church, in the vicinity of Zanesville, and set out for Virginia the ensuing morning.

In passing through Ohio, I visited in the bounds of Miami, Mad River, Scioto and Muskingum Associations, the churches of Mill Creek, Hamilton and Rossville, Fairfield, Elk Creek, Winchester, Tapscot, Sugar Creek, Lebanon, Bethel, Mercer's Run, Caesar's Creek, Darbyville, Turkey Run, Lancaster, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Run, Union, Friendship, Jonathan's Creek and Timber Run.

During my continuance of three weeks in Ohio, I spake, with very few exceptions, twice a day, spent many hours in the most agreeable manner, conversing with the brethren, and notwithstanding the unpleasant feelings amongst some of the brethren in the lower part of the state, if there was a single objection urged by one Baptist during the time, I was not aware of it, unless the following might be considered one. One brother asked me the question as follows: "Did I understand you to say that when Jesus laid down his life, he laid down the life of the church?" I replied that I said it. He observed further that, "Christ said he laid down his life." I replied again, His life is our life; and if the law ever required my life, and did not get it at the hand of Christ, it will have it yet; for, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." That ended the interview on that subject.

From Zanesville I traveled about one hundred and fifty miles before reaching my appointment in Virginia. There for three weeks more I visited my relatives in the vicinity of Fairmont, Marion County, and had many meetings with my friends, brethren, and the churches in the Tygart's Valley River Association, in that and some of the adjoining counties. There, too, I think I found many of my Father's own dear children, who

appeared to be sound in the faith of the gospel, taking heed to themselves and the doctrine; surrounded by enemies on the right hand and on the left, and weak, it is true, as to numbers, yet strong in the faith, giving glory to God. The sweetest concord seemed to prevail amongst them, which brought to my mind the language of David, and of the poet,

"How good and pleasant 'tis to see,
The church of Jesus kind and free;
Appearing like a new born race,
Proving the power of saving grace."

In this region of country I found many things to call up in my memory the giddy and vain scenes of my early life. My father, after some years of residence in the counties of Culpepper and Fauquier, (Va.) removed to, and became one of the early settlers of this "Hill country," when I was but three years old. Twenty-six of my early years were spent in folly and vanity here; and surely if ever the long-suffering and tender mercy of God was portrayed in the case of a rebel, they were in mine. When raising an eye to him, I have been made to exclaim, in the language of the poet,

"When all thy mercy, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost,
In wonder, love and praise."

What must have been my fate, had I been entrusted with my own keeping! True, I had kind and careful parents to watch over me, when under their immediate inspection; but it was easy for me to evade their vision, and ramble and revel in vanity. Still an all-seeing eye was ever on me, and an almighty and merciful hand preserved me, and a well-conducted train of his kind providence was exhibited in my preservation. When contemplating on his goodness and mercy to me, shamefully unworthy as I have been in his sight, with what gratitude should I remember that,

"When in the slippery paths of youth,
With heedless steps I ran,
His arm, unseen, conveyed me safe,
And led me up to man."

But with what additional praises should I crown his holy name, that (as I hope,)

"He saw me wandering, set me right,
And turned my darkness into light."

Although I am prone to murmur, and sometimes think that the hand of my heavenly Father has been heavily laid upon me, yet when I call to mind the multiplied mercies that he has heaped upon me, I am constrained to acknowledge that "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him."

On Thursday, the 10th of November, I set out for home, and traveled directly onward till I reached Wayne County, Ind., and there, on Saturday and Sunday, the 19th and 20th, attended meeting with Salem Church, and on Monday, the 21st, reached home, after an absence of eighty-three days, and having traveled about sixteen hundred miles in my buggy, enjoying the best of health, and found my family all well.

Ungrateful indeed must be the heart that can feel no emotions of gratitude on witnessing such multitudes of mercies flowing incessantly to so unworthy a recipient.

I hope that my brethren and friends among whom I traveled will accept of my warmest thanks and hearty acknowledgements for the many unmerited favors and tokens of regard afforded me during my journeyings amongst them. O that I could more fully appreciate and properly estimate the blessings of meeting with and participating in the privileges and services of the saints of the Most High.

My journey was a more pleasant one than I anticipated, when considering my present condition. One reflection remains, however, as a damper on my feelings, and that is the variance alluded to in the foregoing remarks, amongst some of the brethren in Ohio. Alas! What multitudes of circumstances there are in this imperfect state of existence, to spoil the peace and mar the fellowship of the saints. And in our researches for the real cause, it is not infrequently the case that suspicion falls on some leading preachers, (as they are termed) and consequently a war ensues amongst the brethren, each one advocating the cause of his favorite man. It is not my design here to undertake to justify the preachers in all cases, for they, like others, are but men, fallible men, and it is a lamentable fact that they often cause the people to err. It is greatly to be feared that a thirst for popular approbation, pecuniary emolument, or some other selfish motive, often leads the preacher astray. But could churches and individuals always pursue a commendable course toward them, their wiles would be as harmless to the churches as the tinkling of a cymbal. I am much mistaken if I have not clearly seen of late that an unjustifiable confidence in, and an undue degree of forbearance toward a preacher, is a source of serious evil among brethren. Now, confidence and forbearance, when deserving, and properly reciprocated, are blessings that cannot be too highly esteemed, virtues that ought to be cherished by every christian, without which their social enjoyments would at once cease, and fellowship be but an empty name. But suppose a man attacks some vitally important point of doctrine, such as the everlasting unity (some object to the word union, because it is not in the scriptures) of Christ and the church, or the doctrine of election, or the existence of the Mediator for four thousand years of the world, and then assumes a dictatorial authority over the churches in baptism, and

consequently in the reception of members, and because others oppose his dogmas, and will not tacitly submit to his diction, charges the whole of the Old School Baptists with leaving the tract, on the one hand, and the Arminians on the other, sets himself and his followers up between, as the only ones who are right, and then proclaims that he will quit fighting Arminians, and commences war with the Old School Baptists, and accordingly turns his artillery against the advocates of truth. Does not such a course at once betray all confidence, and does not forbearance cease to be a virtue? Is not such a course calculated to sow among brethren the seeds of discord? Is it not to be lamented that Baptists will close their eyes and stop their ears against everything and everybody that will not join them in setting up their favorite man above all others? Is he not causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of the Bible? Should we not "mark" and "avoid" such? Or should we heedlessly trample upon the holy commandment, and turn a deaf ear to the voice of inspiration? Who amongst us have not seen, in by-gone days, the sad consequences of an undeserving confidence in, and an unjustifiable forbearance toward men? Often have the dear saints been thus led off from the simplicity of the gospel, and been made to wander in solitude, as aliens from their brethren, and thereby deprived of that social intercourse and soul-cheering fellowship, the loss of which is that of one of the richest boons with which heaven has blessed us while pilgrims in this lonely desert. O that the God of all consolation would dispose us all to judge with righteous judgment in those important matters, and stop the merciless hand of the enemy in propagating error and producing discord, jealousy and evil surmisings among his dear children. My dear brethren, let us all be careful not to suffer our creature affections, prepossessions of mind, fancies or notions, to check our zeal and reverence for the word of truth. But let us rather study the holy scriptures, pray sincerely to the Lord to open our understanding that we may understand them, and be enabled by divine grace to yield a strict conformity to their holy dictates, in our doctrinal sentiments and practical performances.

When aspirants for the mastery undertake to pull up the stakes or remove the landmarks of the Old School Baptists, they are not aware of the Bible proof that can be brought to bear upon their theories; and when the sword of the Spirit is drawn upon them, it is not infrequently the case that the cry of persecution is raised, to enlist the sympathies of the populace; and if this fails, to render them as popular as they anticipated, or draw as many disciples after them as they expected, and they find that it will better subserve their interests, they can tack about, perform a retrograde or crawl-fish motion, and then protest that they have not been any place. This kind of a course is only calculated to make the matter worse. How different the course of the humble christian. The best are liable to err while here, where we can only see in part. And how nobly it portrays the christian character to frankly and openly confess our faults to God and to each other. This is calculated to increase confidence, encourage forbearance, restore fellowship, subdue dissention and cause peace to abound among brethren. Surely then we should with

gratitude remember that, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

In conclusion, dear brethren, it should be remembered with thanksgiving by all those who are "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior," who love his word, his ways, his people, and the gates of Zion, that the all-wise God is not to be deceived by all the wily freaks, capricious whims and fantastical machinations of designing men, and that the period is fast approaching when, by the brightness of his coming, he will dispel every gloom, every intervening cloud; and although it may be our legacy while here to wade through deep tribulation and endure sore trials, in filling up the cup of our sufferings in a militant abode, those tribulations and trials will soon be over. O what a contrast then will be developed to our admiring vision! Instead of meeting the billows of trouble, the buffetings of the old enemy, the bane of contention and the continual din of war, we shall hail with transport of unsullied bliss the friend of sinners, the fountain of joy, where uninterrupted peace and eternal repose shall abide everlastingly in the paradise of God.

In the bond of love I remain,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Visit To Sugar Creek Association.

Henry County, Ind., May 11, 1854.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - Having returned home from a tour of meetings in the western part of our state, and in the bounds of the Sugar Creek Association, I embrace the earliest opportunity, in compliance with the request of many brethren there, of letting them hear from me through the SIGNS. I left home on the 24th day of April, and returned on the 10th of May, finding all well.

I do not know of anything more vitally important to speak of in the first place, than to name the many reports that have gone abroad respecting the heretical doctrine said to be advocated by the brethren in that vicinity. Often as I have been made to witness the sad consequences among brethren resulting from giving heed to the misrepresentations of the enemies of the truth, I must acknowledge that I took with me some fearful apprehensions respecting the faith of the brethren there, and am therefore again admonished to pay no regard to their base falsehoods. I am made to conclude that misrepresentations from such a source would do but little injury to the brethren if they could get none of the Baptists to peddle for them. In that case their insinuations go out under Baptist authority, and are followed with a train of mischief.

How careful should we be to bridle our tongues in all such cases, and also when there are real existing difficulties among us. Those apprehensions, however, vanished like the morning dew, on becoming acquainted with the brethren. I cannot change my sentiments, nor can I dissemble in the proclamation of them. I knew not, therefore, what kind of a reception I should meet with; but after declaring them as fully, freely and faithfully as my weak capacities would admit of, and after hearing those brethren in both their public and private discourses, there was but one thing in the way of my according to them freely the right hand of fellowship, and that one thing is a matter of no small annoyance to me. It is a feeling sense of my own unworthiness to be reckoned amongst the saints of the Lord. I found an existing difficulty in one of the churches, which I firmly believe to have originated in the miscolorings and mischievous insinuations of the enemies of the truth. My earnest prayer is, and I cherish the fond hope, too, that the Lord will dispel the mists that the enemy has thrown among the brethren, and enable them to feel and to manifest the same love for each other that appeared to predominate in so good and so happy a degree with the heaven-born children, generally, in that region. And here I will observe that I was exceedingly gratified at beholding the harmony and mutuality that existed, the love and fellowship that abounded among the brethren, with that one exception.

Love is one of the best evidences that we can have to testify that we are the children of God. "Whosoever loveth, is born of God." Satan cannot love, nor can his emissaries. Under the influence of a zeal for God which is not according to knowledge, they may form associations; concoct measures and mature schemes for money-making purposes, personal aggrandizement and the acquisition of human or popular applause, yes, they may create their unhallowed combinations, and put into operation all their patented or newly constructed machinations, they may draw out the sword and bend their bow to slay the upright, but they are strangers to the love of God; and therefore, "Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken." O that Zion's children could love one another with a pure heart fervently; not in word only, but in deed and in truth. Do we not daily see and feel the necessity of cultivating such a principle? How comfortable the feeling, how consoling to participate in the reciprocity of sensations flowing from abounding love. How careful should we be to let brotherly love continue; to do nothing to hinder its work. When the children of Zion can patronize such a sentiment, the enemy may shoot showers of his poisoned darts in vain; they will fall harmless at their feet. Then, brethren, "Let love be without dissimulation; abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

But we have another pleasing consideration to suggest to the saints in relation to the Lord's children there. He appears manifestly to be reviving his work in the midst of them. The meetings were well attended during the time that I was with them, considering the busy season of the year, it being immediately at the time of corn-planting. On Sundays the houses, though large, could not contain the people, who appeared to give the deepest

attention, many of whose cheeks were bathed in tears. At Crawfordsville, on the 7th inst., their houses were filled to overflowing. Even the doors and windows were crowded with seemingly anxious hearers. After preaching, there were four baptized, who had previously related to the church what the Lord had done for them. Never in my life have I seen so many in the same length of time, who (though not members of the church militant) were ready to give a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. It was not uncommon to find two or three in a house. In the vehicle that conveyed me to the meeting at Crawfordsville, there were no less than four. But I wish it expressly understood that this is not going on under the unholy influence of modern revival makers. It is where the doctrine of God our Savior is preached, where HE in the immutability of his nature is proclaimed as exercising his right in the absolute and actual choice of his People in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is where the myrmidons of anti-christ are manfully opposed, and their hallucinations ably exposed. It is where the hearts of the children of the free woman are smitten, not with the fears of hell, but with the love of Zion's King, and therefore prepared for the reception of the gospel of the grace of God; they receive and enjoy with heavenly transports and celestial rapture and reverence the unsullied bliss that teems from that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the legitimate consequences of which are a hatred for sin, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Under the benign influence of that love, they are bending their course to Zion. Their hearts and their affections are there, and nothing appears to be in their way but a deep sense of their own unworthiness. They appear manifestly to be the circumcision that worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. O that God, in the abounding of his grace and in the plenitude of his mercy, may continue to shine in their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and enable them to see their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption all complete in him.

I will conclude my scribble by endeavoring to prepare a few lines of poetry for the consideration of the characters named in the foregoing remarks.

Cease, dear children, cease to look,
For selfish righteousness within.
Has not Christ your Savior took,
And borne, and canceled all your sin?

Look to him for righteousness;
To him are all your praises due;
He bore your grief and sealed your peace,
And gives his righteousness to you.

Then give yourselves up to his cause,

And give him all the glory, too;
Accept his grace, obey his laws,
That grace will bear you conquerors through.

Brother Beebe, if you think the foregoing observations will not crowd from the columns of the SIGNS as good, or better matter, give them a place there; otherwise dispose of them as prudence may dictate. Meanwhile, may the grace, mercy and peace that has abounded, as I trust, to the chief of sinners, sustain and console yourself, with all the household of faith.

Brethren, farewell.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Journey To The East, And Return Through Canada.

Henry County, Ind., July, 1855.

ESTEEMED BROTHER BEEBE: - Such have been my engagements since my return home from the northeast, that I have not had time to comply with the solicitations of brethren who requested me frequently during my peregrinations amongst them to write immediately on my return home, through the SIGNS or otherwise. I will briefly state, that after parting with you in Dundas, we took the cars in Hamilton, Canada, on Monday morning, June 11th, dined in London, supped on board the steamer while crossing the Detroit River from Windsor to Detroit, and on the same evening, at the latter place, went aboard the splendid steamer "Ocean," and sailing during the night, and until about seven o'clock the next morning, we landed at Cleveland, Ohio, and took breakfast there; after which, taking the morning train, we dined in Columbus, then proceeded on to Xenia, where I parted with brother and sister Dudley, taking the first train to Dayton, then by the way of Richmond and Newcastle, I arrived and took supper at home on the same evening, the 12th, finding all well. Not having heard from my family during my absence, I was made to reflect upon the benign goodness of him whose providential care had preserved me and mine, and to conclude that I had an additional testimony that, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassion fails not."

For months previous to my going to and returning from the east, I concluded that the words of Jeremiah were to me particularly appropriate, "He hath set me in dark places." Lam. iii. 6. Nor did it appear to me that the brethren and churches where I labored were in a different condition; but that with but very few exceptions the language of the same

prophet, book, chapter and 44th verse was applicable to them, viz: "Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through." But again, since my return home, I think we have had an evidence of the truth of the 31st and 32nd verses of the same book and chapter: "For the Lord will not cast off forever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies." A few days after my return home the meeting of the church at Honey Creek came on. There for years past desolation, and torpidity seemed to predominate. It had appeared more like a "lodge in a garden of cucumbers," or "a besieged city," than a place of rejoicing and comfort for the Lord's careworn children.

But on repairing to the place, and before entering the door of the meeting-house, the increased assemblage and the harmonious melody that echoed from the walls and saluted my ears, seemed to tell me, in language not to be misunderstood, that the Lord was there. And really, I think he was there according to his promise, "to bless them." On that occasion five were added to the church; one by letter, one by relation, who had been decoyed off among Arminians, where she could not live, and consequently had wandered for years in solitude, and three by experience and baptism. The next week came our meeting at home; and although we had no addition to the church, I think I had not seen manifested a more feeling sense of a refreshing season from the presence of the Lord since we have been a church. There was on that occasion Elder McCormic, from the more northern part of our association, with us, who informed me that deep and increasing interest is exhibited in that section of country, with largely increased congregations of attentive hearers. A few days after our meeting I set out to the western part of our association, (Lebanon) and was absent ten days. Here again from his bounteous fullness the good Shepherd of Israel was pleased to pour down upon his thirsty garden the streams of consolation which, teeming from his celestial plentitude, his beatific presence, caused "the parched ground to become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." On Sunday I had the gratification again of baptizing two of his dear children, while joy and gladness abounded on the bank of the stream amongst the numerous multitude assembled there. Although our meetings during the laboring days of the week came in the midst of wheat harvest, they were well attended with attentive hearers.

If I am not mistaken, it has been clearly portrayed to me since my return home,

"The Lord can clear the darkest skies,
Can give us day for night,
Make floods of sacred sorrows rise,
To rivers of delight."

During the meeting, another one of the lambs returned to the fold, who had been led off by the Anti-Union Baptists.

On last Saturday and Sunday we had another sweet meeting at Honey Creek. Four of the precious lambs of the Redeemer came forward on Saturday, and related to the church what the Lord had done for them, whom I baptized on Sunday. How long the Lord in his tender mercy may continue to shed upon us his radiant beams of divine light, and cause to run down our street the healing streams of consolation, or how soon again we may be immersed in the gloomy shades of sable darkness, or overwhelmed in the dreary billows of tribulation, no mortal tongue can predict. One thing I know full well, which is that we might as well command the sun to rise at midnight or go down at noon, with a hope of success, as to command one beam of that light, unless the Lord is pleased graciously to emit it, or obscure it when it pleases him to "shine in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." How thoroughly am I convinced from time to time that those blessings do not flow to me, an unworthy, helpless and dependent sinner, in consequence of any labors that I have performed or can perform, any privations that I have suffered, or any oblations that I have offered; but because "he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy," "because his compassion fails not."

How obdurate the heart that feels no stirring emotion of gratitude for blessings so unparalleled, so undeserved, and yet how oft I feel that heart to be mine! How unthankful the tongue that is so slow to respond to the ceaseless beneficent kindness of the Lord; and yet, too, that tongue is mine. O that the Lord would rouse up our sleeping faculties, and under a deep sensibility of our continual obligations to him, enable us with David to exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies."

Before concluding my remarks, I wish to say to the numerous brethren and sisters with whom I became acquainted in passing through Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Canada, that my mind often recurs with pleasing memory to the pleasant interviews we had together, the reciprocity of fellowship that appeared to pervade our circles and associations, and the very kind attention received while with them. I remember, too, with fond recollection, the apparent firmness of the dear saints with whom I became acquainted in the opulent cities of Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia and New York. How commendable to behold, amid the haughty strides of priestly arrogance, the gaudy show, the worldly magnificence, the trappings, tapestry and delectable things, with which the Mother of Harlots and her Protestant Daughters have endeavored to decorate and emblazen a worldly religion, the Pharisaic zeal, the legions of priest-made proselytes, with all their tirade of abuse, contumely, persecution and misrepresentation; "a remnant according to the election of grace," unmoved by any or all of these things; firmly established upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, whose refuge is the eternal God, with his everlasting arms beneath them, receiving at the same time from the glorious Sun of Righteousness the lucid streams of immortal light,

the brilliancy of which is sufficient to dash into the shades forever all the pomposity and ostentatious glare of a time-serving religion! And while the giddy professors, the pitiful dupes, the fashionable will-worshippers of the present day are building their Babel towers with the vain hope of reaching heaven thereby, that "chosen generation" is trusting in the efficacious blood and righteousness of a gracious Redeemer. While those bag-ridden minions are sacrificing their perishing toys, that the moth and rust will soon consume, to a priestly hierarchy, the love-smitten children of a beneficent Father are offering up the oblations of thanksgiving and praise through an all-sufficient Mediator for reigning grace that saves, preserves and sustains them. O! What a contrast between the two companies.

While one is reveling in transitory toys,
The other is feasting upon eternal joys.

The one will pass away like the feeble flickerings of the dying taper, or the faint glimmering of the momentary glow-worm, when all will be shrouded in a mantle of darkness, desolation, privation and woe; while the other, durable, as the throne of God, will shine as the brightness of the firmament, and beam forever in the brilliancy of eternal day, where the ever rising tide that flows from the fountain of grace shall supply every need and banish every fear. When upon the pinions of faith that is based upon the immutable promises of him who cannot lie, for its warrant, we can soar beyond the murky vista of our future pilgrimage, and view the exuberant plenitude of immortal bliss that awaits us, and when from the life-sustaining streams of the river that gladdens the city of God we can enjoy a foretaste of its soul-stirring ecstasy, our darkness is turned into day, our mournings into joy, and our murmurings into melodious songs of praises. Then, too, our doubts are dispersed, our fears banished, our hopes revived, and we can sing with the poet,

"If while on earth it is so sweet,
To sit and sing at Jesus' feet,
What will it be to wear a crown,
And sit with Jesus on the throne?"

Yours in the unity of the faith of the gospel. Farewell.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Removal To Delaware County, Indiana.

Luray, Henry Co., Ind., Feb., 1856.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - In the early part of October last I had a severe attack of chills and fever, irritability of the stomach and nervous system, which reduced me quite low. From that time until recently I have been much confined to my bedroom, and also to my bed. My confinement has prevented, in a great degree, that reciprocity of union and communion with the saints, which are well calculated to alleviate the cares and sufferings of the Lord's afflicted children here. True, I have received numerous letters from them that have been highly appreciated, but have not given them that attention that their contents have richly deserved. I hope they will forgive me when they will have known my situation. My health, however, is now so far reinstated that I travel short distances occasionally, and hope to be able to visit you in New York some time next month. I expect to remove to Delaware County about the last of March; and will here inform my brethren and friends who may write to me after that time, and also the editors whose papers I read, that my Post Office address will be Muncie, Delaware Co., Ind., instead of Luray, Henry Co., Ind. I expect to settle two miles south of the Muncie Depot, immediately on the New Castle State Road, where I hope to receive the calls of my friends and brethren who may pass that way.

I have contributed but little to the columns of the SIGNS of late, and the prominent reason is, I am not capacitated to contribute much. Occasionally, however, I meet with something in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, or elsewhere, that is calculated to stir up my almost dormant faculties, and cause me to throw into the scale my little mite, when I can entertain a little hope that the interests of Zion may be subserved thereby. On looking over the second number, present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, I have been made to reflect much on the communications had between brother Linn, of Pennsylvania, and yourself; and also upon the published Circular of the Tygart's Valley River Association. Probably the fact of my having been raised (principally) in the vicinity (the northwestern part of Virginia) where that association is generally held, and also of having visited and tried to preach for a number of the churches several times since my removal to the west, causes me to feel a deeper interest in the case than I otherwise should have felt.

If I mistake not, my last visit there was in the fall of 1853, and it was an interesting one to me, and appeared to be to the brethren generally. It was the more so to myself because I found them to be (as I thought) thorough going Old School Baptists. Nor do I yet think I was mistaken in that opinion. I found, however, that there had been some busybodies operating among them, who were well calculated to deceive, not by disseminating unsound doctrine at that time, (for had they done this, I feel confident that there were brethren there who would have detected them) but by misrepresenting those who contend for the truth.

It is a fact, and one much to be lamented too, that those who are disposed to cause divisions and draw a party after them, (the big party they want) when they set out with

their false notions, and find that Old School Baptists prove them to be such by the scriptures, their zeal seems to increase with their mischievous designs, and they will withhold their real sentiments for a time, when with those who love the truth, and undertake to consummate their purposes by calumny, detraction and misrepresentation. Let it not be thought that my design in these remarks is to wage war upon our enemies who have gone out from us, nor yet to defend the characters of brethren Trott, Beebe and Dudley; for they are far more able to defend themselves (were it necessary) than is their humble servant. I hope I have a higher object in view, and that object is the peace, quietude and harmony of the Zion of God.

I am pained and grieved when I consider how many of the dear children of Zion have read that Circular, and settled down in the opinion that the misrepresentations therein contained are the real sentiments of those calumniated brethren. What are we, to expect from such a state of things? Why, it is rational to suppose that in that association there will exist a distant and hard feeling towards those brethren who have spent a large proportion of their lives in defending and publishing the holy, heart-animating truth of the gospel.

Permit me, dear brethren, though a little one among you, to entreat you, not to indulge in a malevolent and bitter spirit towards your enemies, nor those who may have been deceived by them; but, as brother B. has remarked, [and I was glad to hear it] "pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute, you." May the Lord, if it is his will, grant them the forgiveness of their sins according to the riches of his grace. I do hope that this circumstance may have a good effect upon churches and associations in the future. For an association to be so far inveigled into the meshes of the enemies to the truth as to be brought down to dabble in the filthy pool of detraction and calumny, and take up the carnal weapons of their enemies with which to prostrate their brethren, is a matter much to be deplored.

Brethren, would it not have savored more of a christian spirit in you, after hearing those reports, (and perhaps knowing they were from the lips of an enemy to those brethren) to have called in a christian spirit upon them for their views upon the subjects, as brother Linn has upon brother Beebe since the action of the Association, and let them have their own expositors, before publishing them broadcast to the world?

When the enemies of the Old School Baptists undertake to preach their doctrine for them, they make sad work of it, especially if they receive their version of it. Elders Beebe, Dudley and Trott stand identified, probably, with far the largest associational correspondence of the Old School Baptists that the world knows. They have published far and wide their sentiments, both from the pulpit and the press. Look over their own productions, brethren, (you will probably find imperfections, for I presume that none of them make any pretensions to infallibility, nor should we expect that while we are suffered to know only in part,) and see if you can find anything there, to justify you in the course you have taken. Ah! Look further; look into the unadulterated oracles of God, and

see whether you have either commandment or precept there to sustain you. Should you fail in both cases, it follows, as a matter of course, that you have done wrong; and how beautifully it develops the christian character when we err, (as we all do) to make the most timely amends for our misgivings. I feel no disposition to conceal or encourage the errors of any. If such exist among us, I am willing, yea, anxious, that they should be faithfully ferreted out. We do not expect, or ever hope to arrive at a state of perfection while in the flesh, yet notwithstanding the malevolence of our enemies in misrepresenting our views and exaggerating our errors, I think I speak advisedly when I venture the opinion that there has not been a time, since the days of the apostles, when the church exhibited a greater degree of unity of sentiment, and that sentiment more thoroughly based upon the doctrine of the Bible, than is now portrayed by the Old School Baptists. True, there are some in different parts of the country, under the lead of those who are incessantly howling round our borders, and who, because, they could not be bell- weathers, would not be weathers at all, but put on all the forms and fashions of the canine race, endeavoring to bite and devour the sheep. But fear them not. Let them howl, and bark, and snarl, and bite if they can. Nay, let his Satanic majesty, their conductor, marshal all his legions, use all his serpentine windings, resort to all his deceivableness and sophisms.

"We laugh to scorn his cruel power,
While by our Shepherd's side,
The sheep he never can devour,
Although he may divide."

Let him through his agencies pour out his floods of reproach and abuse, puff his storms and hurricanes, but let Zion fear not; turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, and she will leave her foes in the distance - outride every flood and every storm, and ultimately enter the port of complete safety, and find her safe anchorage in the harbor of eternal rest.

When I venture the opinion that a great degree of union prevails among us at the present time, I do not venture said opinion upon mere conjecture, but consider I have had a little opportunity of examining the matter. Within the last few years past, I have traveled in ten different states of the Union, the District of Columbia and Canada West; heard much preaching, and conversed freely with the brethren; and if there is a material discrepancy amongst us on any important point of doctrine, my judging faculties have been too weak to discover it. But those disposed to give heed to our enemies, may soon see mole-hills rise into mountains, and prepare themselves for biting and devouring. May the Lord fill the hearts of his children with that love which hides a multitude of transgressions, and deliver them from that spirit which causes them to make an offender for a word, and that is calculated to alienate them in their feelings toward each other.

Then, should there be errors and wounds among us, we shall be in a condition to attend to them as we should; probe them to the bottom, but probe them tenderly. Effect a permanent cure if possible; let it be done by the rule and in the spirit of the gospel, but, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph." We are daily admonished that we are yet in the flesh that "lusteth against the Spirit;" that we carry with us a body of death, an old man that is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. We are admonished in the scriptures, too, to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, to keep under the body, to put off the old man. The deeds of the body, the actions of the old man, are all inimical to the cause and kingdom of Christ. The works of the flesh and fruit of the Spirit stand in hostile array against each other, as two belligerent armies; and we would do well to mark and consider them, particularly in our church and associational actions and intercourse with each other, as portrayed in Gal.v.19 - 23.

If we retrospect carefully the course of those individuals who have risen up among us, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, and examine particularly the edifice they have reared in their own names, by their own means, for their own aggrandizement, to give notoriety to their own persons and secure popularity to their own boasted intellectual powers, our eye is met with emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies and envyings upon the frontispiece of each superstructure, and especially upon the Babels of those that have gone off within the range of our recollection from the going off of the New School Baptists, down to the anti-christian ones of later days.

O that the christian could shun, as he would a deadly poison, all such as assemble in those unhallowed conclaves, concocting their mischievous designs, and then, with the false zeal of infuriated pharisees, endeavor to allure the wayward pilgrim into the devious wanderings marked out by them.

Dear brethren, although this state of things has existed in a greater or less degree heretofore, and perhaps must while we are in part the subjects of mortality, a brighter prospect awaits us. The exaltation of our all-competent Mediator upon his triumphant throne, the Spirit of the living God of Israel, the sufficiency of the gospel, and the gospel salvation, immutability of the sure promises there contained, simplicity of the laws and ordinances that should govern and instruct Zion in her militant movements, the rich treasury of spiritual blessings that constitute the incorruptible inheritance of the saints, are admirably calculated to secure to us the final and triumphant victory, soothe our downcast spirits, encourage hope, strengthen our faith, illuminate our pathway, and so to fill us with love, joy and admiration, as to cause our hearts to overflow with gratitude, thanksgiving and praise to the matchless name of our dear Deliverer. While these bright prospects beam before us, those heart-cheering anticipations buoy our desponding spirits, while we look forward to the final dissolution of all terrestrial objects, the final overthrow of all powers that can possibly conflict with our eternal interests, and the downfall of every spirit of seduction, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all conversation and

godliness?" How essentially necessary it is in order to our consolation here, while in an enemy's domains, that we should seriously consider how Jesus has wrought, and what he has done for his younger brethren. What a paternal, filial and fraternal relation we stand in to our God and Savior, and to each other.

Children of the same heavenly, and consequently heirs of the same celestial inheritance. How should we love one another with a pure heart fervently, bear each other's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Watch over each other for good, and particularly, take heed to ourselves and the doctrine. Brethren, if we know these things, happy are we if we do them. Then we need not fear what man can do to us. But a little while and we shall be freed from mortality and all its perplexing cares. May we all remember that Jesus also, that he might save the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach; for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Brethren, farewell.

Yours in truth and sincerity,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Visit To Kentucky.

Muncie, Ind., July 7th, 1856.

BROTHER BEEBE: - By your permission, I will give you a short history of my recent visit to Kentucky, through the columns of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, in compliance with the requests of many brethren there. I reached Lexington, Wednesday evening, June 14th - was met and conducted to brother T. P. Dudley's residence, and very unexpectedly, but with much joy, found my dear brother, Elder James Bicknell of New York, there. I found brother Dudley and his family well, with the exception of his fractured limb, which still disables him, and renders it impracticable for him to travel on foot without his crutches.

On Thursday afternoon, brother and sister Dudley, brother Bicknell and myself, set out for Mt. Carmel Church, which we reached in the evening, and lodged for the night with our esteemed brother Wornal. On Friday morning we reached the meeting at Mt. Carmel Church, which continued that and the two succeeding days. During the meeting two servants came forward and related to the church what great things the Lord had done for them, in the most clear and satisfactory manner, giving unmistakable evidences of the reign of grace. On Saturday morning those two, with three others, (servants,) were

baptized by Elder S. Jones, brother Dudley, the pastor of the church, being unable to administer the ordinance, in consequence of his wound. Here we were strongly reminded of the prediction of the Psalmist, Psa. lxxviii. 11, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God," and Zephaniah iii. 10, "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my supplicants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."

Never, in my life, did I witness a more clear exhibition of the wisdom of Jehovah, in the adaptation of the gospel and the government of the kingdom of Christ to all conditions of men, than was manifested during our late visit to Kentucky. From the rising to the going down of the sun, from the northern to the southern pole, they pour in rich profusion the joyful stream of consolation, and administer in mild and heavenly strains, the wholesome lessons of instruction to the careworn pilgrim of every clime, complexion, grade or condition. The Jew, the Greek, the bond, the free, the male, the female, the aged men, the young men, the parent, the child, the master and the servant, are all made welcome to the same rich repast, all eat abundantly of the same spiritual meat, all drink bounteously of the same spiritual ROCK. O what a theme for the humble servant of Christ and his church to dwell upon is the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and the benign government of the King of saints. How wide the contrast between the employment of the true servant of God, who can, with all prudence, "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters in all things; not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things;" and then turn to the master in like manner, and exhort him to his duty to the servant from the same rich treasury, and that lawless clan who are continually endeavoring to inculcate rebellion and insubordination to servants, and thereby chafing and provoking the master to anger and bitterness, and rendering it absolutely necessary to bind a more galling yoke upon them. The gospel and the government of the Redeemer's kingdom are wisely adapted, too, to the situation of its subjects in every kindred, nation, tongue and people; not only in consoling, but in admonishing to a commendable subjection to the higher powers that be ordained of God; so that their implicit obedience to the laws of the kingdom which is not of this world, instead of making them refractory, disobedient and insubordinate to rulers and magistrates and the laws they administer, brings them into a quiet and peaceable subjection to every law of every nation that is founded in reason or justice.

In short, let them alone to worship and to act in accordance with the gospel and the government of their Savior and their King, and they need no other laws to make them good subjects of any nation under heaven. How unlike those unhallowed will-worshippers who are ever eager to grasp the reins of earthly governments, push forward their diabolical dogmas at the point of the sword or the muzzle of the rifle, and fulminate their anathemas against the rulers and magistrates of mild and rational civil governments.

After leaving Mt. Carmel, we visited, in company with Elders Bicknell of New York and J.M. Theobald of Kentucky, and part of the time, Elders T. P. Dudley and S. Jones, the churches of Elizabeth, Bald Eagle, Elk Lick, Georgetown and Bryans, besides other

intermediate meetings. Immense crowds of attentive hearers attended most of the meetings; in some instances the houses, though spacious, were not large enough to seat the ladies that were in attendance. At Elizabeth, particularly, we were under the necessity of leaving the pulpit and addressing the audience from the door, that all who were anxious might hear.

Although the Licking Association was held with this church last fall, it was said that such a crowd had never before been seen at Elizabeth. But best of all was the harmony and love that seemed to pervade the meetings and social circles, during our visit.

Although the speakers in attendance were from three different states of the Union, whose residences were far distant from each other, not one conflicting sentiment, so far as I was capable of judging, was delivered at any one of the meetings; so that while other denominations are split up into "churches north" and "churches south," the Old School Baptist Church, (or church of Christ,) "knows no North, no South, nothing but the Union," if we may be allowed to use the language of an eminent statesman on a different occasion.

Truly, the love of the brethren in Kentucky appeared to "be without dissimulation," and we had, while with them, "a refreshing season from the presence of the Lord." Peace was seen to flow among them like a river, and O may the God of peace still enable all his dear children to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

I left brother A.F. Dudley's on Monday morning, the 23rd day of June, joined brother Bicknell at Paris, parted with him affectionately in Cincinnati, on the same day, and in the evening reached my son-in-law's in Henry Co., Indiana, and on the next day my home in Delaware Co., finding all well. And I think it certain that down to my latest memory I shall recollect, with emotions of joy, the interviews that we had with the brethren and sisters of the Licking Association in Kentucky.

"We are bound to give thanks always 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."

"Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope, through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good work." This is the fervent desire of a poor, weak and unworthy sinner, but (I humbly hope) your brother in the precious Redeemer's kingdom.

Farewell.

J. F. JOHNSON.

P.S. - Brother Beebe, please excuse the haste and imperfection of this scribble, as I have been unusually engaged in writing yesterday and today. J. F. J.

Removal To Warwick, New York.

Warwick, Orange Co., N. Y., Oct. 28, 1856.

BROTHER BEEBE: - As is out of the question for me, by private letters, to comply with the numerous requests of my dear brethren and friends in the West, and other places, who wished to hear from us soon after our arrival here, and as many of them have access to the **SIGNS OF THE TIMES**, I will through that medium, by your permission, drop them a line.

My very dear Brethren, Children and Friends: Leaving home on the morning of the 8th inst., and encountering no serious obstacles by the way, we reached Middletown on the evening of the 9th, about sundown, all well. With brother Beebe and others, we spent the time there very agreeably until Saturday morning the 11th, when, through the kindness of Mr. G. J. Beebe, editor of the **Banner of Liberty**, he conducted my two daughters and youngest son across the country, myself and oldest son taking the cars for Chester, where we were met by a friend, and conveyed to Warwick, where we all arrived in safety about 12 o'clock on said day. We met with a hearty welcome by our friends to our new home; have received the kindest attention from them since; enjoyed the inestimable blessing of mingling with the dear and very agreeable saints here, and have attended very pleasant meetings with them on each Sunday morning and evening since our arrival. What a privilege! How consoling to the care-worn pilgrim to meet, associate and commune with the component parts of that "one body" which is compacted together by joints and inseparable cords, and bounded by immovable stakes, not one of which shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; vitalized by "one Spirit," which pervades and actuates each and every member of the body, whether located in the East, the West, the North, or the South, in this world or out of it, and by which they are all "called in one hope of their calling," to the participation in, and the fellowship and enjoyment of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," all reposing under the banner and controlled by the all-competent, but mild government of "one God and Father of all," who stands, has ever stood, and will forever stand, united to them in that paternal relation which eternally secures to them all the glory of that eternal inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away; and "who is above all" in glory, and honor, and power, and majesty, and dominion; who speaks and it is done; who commands and it stands fast, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;" and who is through all to regulate all the social concerns of the entire family, to assign to each and all the members of the "one body" the different places and spheres in which they are to act or move in the responsibilities imposed upon them for the edification and mutual comfort of the family; and last, but not least, who is "in them all," to mete out to every one a sufficiency of grace according to the gift of Christ, in whom it was given to them before the world began, but now dispensed to each one in ample plenitude to sustain them

in all their trials, supply them with every needful blessing, and prepare them for the acceptable service of their God and Father with reverence and godly fear, and which must and will reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, over the world, the flesh and the devil, whether in the forms of thrones or dominions, principalities or powers; *all* are completely subservient - all under the full dominion - all at the sovereign disposition of HIM who sitteth upon the throne, Lord of lords, King of kings, who reigns and must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet, and given us the victory. O what a theme! How admirably calculated to brighten our prospects, inspire our hopes, encourage our faith and sustain our oft dejected spirits while exposed to trials, conflicts, opposition, persecutions and tribulations of various kinds, to which we are incident while passing through the murky vale of our pilgrimage here!

"A hope so much divine,
May trials well endure."

The manifestation and enjoyment of such a relation to our heavenly Father, our elder Brother, and each other, such soul-reviving privileges and brilliant prospects, presents to our minds most glorious exhibitions of the wisdom, goodness and faithfulness of our covenant-keeping God, in the adaptation of his special mercies to our peculiar conditions and situations here, and portrays to us in radiant streams of light and reviving sensations of joy the matchless and unchanging love of God, our heavenly Father; and when shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, manifestly and joyfully unites us together in one common bond of love, as the nearest, and dearest kindred in Christ. How pleasant it is to love when that love is reciprocated! This mutualizes our fellowship, sweetens our family altars, joyfully enriches our associations with each other, enables us happily to appreciate the gracious provisions of our heavenly Father, while we sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, our dearest and elder Brother. And when we witness the banner of his love over us, playing and streaming in the sweet breezes, that cheer us, his fruit is sweet to our taste, and we are forcibly and happily constrained to love him, because he first loved us, and consequently to love one another with a pure heart fervently.

My dear brethren and sisters of Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and other places among whom I traveled so extensively in years that are gone by, and with whom I have so frequently mingled, when and where we have taken sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company: I scarcely know how to guide my pen further while my overflowing mind recurs with sad and fond recollection to the scenes of trial and joy through which the Lord has brought us. And, though many miles now lie between us, I know that we cannot forget each other.

"Blest be the dear, uniting love,

That will not let us part;
Our bodies may far off remove,
But we are joined in heart.

Joined in one spirit to our Head,
We wait his will to know,
That we in his right steps may tread,
And follow him below."

While absent in body, my roving mind is daily running and ranging through your social circles, and I long to be with you, and shall again visit you if the Lord will. However this may be, it is a consoling reflection that, through a glorious Mediator, our prayers are permitted to meet and mingle at a common throne of grace for each others welfare.

"My soul shall pray for Zion still,
While life and breath remain;
There my best friends, my kindred dwell,
There God my Savior reigns."

But the circumstance of my being either here or there, is but a small item in the vast empire of our God. When I consider the majesty of his person, the brilliancy of his glory, the infinity of his wisdom and the greatness of his power, I am lost in insignificance and made to exclaim, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" When again I consider that the word man here, without an article to limit it, must be taken in its widest sense, that is, to mean all mankind; when I reflect further, upon the myriads heaped upon myriads that have passed away, that now cover the wide domain of Jehovah's footstool, and that will continue to inhabit it in all time to come; ah! when with those inconceivable heaps of myriads I contrast myself; this little speck of nothing, and less than nothing comparatively speaking; what am I? Who am I? And where am I? And why should I ever hope to attract the slightest notice of the great Jehovah?

But I remember the two sparrows sold for a farthing, and how they were cared for by our Father. And worthless as his children may feel in themselves, they are not only cared for by him, but even the very hairs of their heads are all numbered, and they are precious in his sight.

"O! What is man, poor fallen man!
Or any of his race,
That God should make it his concern,
To visit him with grace?

That God who darts the lightning's down,
Who shakes the worlds above,
And mountains tremble at his frown,
How wondrous is his love!"

But why? Ah, why are such polluted rebels as ourselves, when considered in our totally depraved nature, precious in the sight of One so gloriously majestic? But again,

"What was there in me that could merit esteem,
Or gave the Creator delight?"

Yes, that is the question, what was there in me? But the question is solved, "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy." And again, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." But still, here may be another question, Why does it seem good in his sight? Let it not be forgotten that we have a higher and holier relationship; a spiritual, aside from a natural one. Our God is a spirit, and his children born of the Spirit; "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Here then is the key to the whole mystery. He is their Father, and they are His children. He is an unchanging Father. "I am the Lord; I change not," and, therefore, having loved his children once, he never has, nor ever will cease to love them. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Then, viewing us in our fallen nature, as he could not cease to love us; nay, was "rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins." That sin was the transgression of a holy law, and, therefore, made us obnoxious to its curse. "Cursed is every one," &c. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good," but we are carnal, sold under sin. Had we then all been sacrificed upon one altar, carnal as we are by nature, that holy law could never have received the offering, and as a matter in course, we must have wailed under its curse forever. But that loving Father would not have it so, but "laid help upon one that is mighty." "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." In this our Father not only exhibited the immutability of his love, but a wonderful commendation of it towards us, even when we were dead in sins. Here, too, we have a most glorious portrait of the condescension, faithfulness and love of our adorable Mediator "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

"O, love divine, all love excelling,
Joy from heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thine humble dwelling,

All thy faithful mercies crown!"

My dear brethren, "seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Considering, then, this eternal union and relation to us, those wondrous acts of grace in our behalf, and the immense debt that our God and Savior canceled for us, we may readily account for the plenitude of matchless mercies that incessantly flow to us from his divine fullness, and for the special and parental care that is so manifestly exercised toward us.

But I must conclude, as the bell is just tolling on a funeral occasion, which I am requested to attend in one hour.

Farewell, my brethren! Love, praise and serve your highly exalted Redeemer; love one another with a pure heart fervently; live in peace, and that the God of peace may dwell richly in your hearts, is the sincere desire of your unworthy brother, pressed with many cares, and who retains you in fond recollection, desiring to be remembered by you at the throne of grace.

J. F. JOHNSON.

II Peter 1:10.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." - 2 Pet. i. 10.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I feel disposed to pen some remarks on the foregoing Scripture, and place them at your disposal.

The preceding epistle of Peter was directed, "To the strangers (strangers and pilgrims, the world knowing us not) scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, elect, according to the foreknowledge of God," &c. The one in which our text stands, "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

In fact, the whole New Testament is dedicated to the same characters; it is, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ" exclusively. Nor need we stop here; for "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." But in this particular epistle, the characters addressed have the petition of the apostle, that "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." Here, God the Father is brought to view, who is the original source of all blessings, and Jesus our Lord, the appointed Mediator, or the

only medium through which all spiritual ones come to us. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Hence, we discern that the fountain of all spiritual blessings, and the channel-way or medium through which we are to be made the recipients, are clearly set before us. How consistent, then, is the prayer for grace and peace, as grace "was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," and, as "He is our peace." Why it is that Arminians claim in Peter an advocate, or that he approximates nearer their imaginary work-system, than Paul and others, I cannot tell, unless it be in consequence of their utter blindness and ignorance of scriptural things. For after exhibiting God our Father and Jesus our Lord, as the fullness, and medium from and through whom all spiritual blessings flow, he says: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." Notwithstanding the world is constantly ringing with an incessant ding-dong of works; sinners, dead in sin, called upon to repent, believe, obey, pray, pay their money and use their means for the support of the Sunday Schools, Theological Seminaries, Tract Societies, Temperance Societies, Missionary Societies, and a host of other things are brought forward to purchase the blessings and procure the salvation of sinners; by one fell stroke of an inspired apostle it is all swept by the board; for "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness."

Then, as faith is an important "gift of God," a fruit of the Spirit, "of the operation of God," and the Lord's children "believe according to the working of his mighty power;" and as that faith is a living and operating principle, ["see how faith wrought with his works,"] impelled by this divine power, which works in us mightily, we are to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. Here, then, is work for the christian; not that he may get life, or be saved, but because His divine power hath given unto us the ability and all those other things that pertain to life and godliness, as Isaiah saith, "The Lord will ordain peace for us, for he hath wrought all our works in us." Therefore, "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren (idle, in the margin) nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark ye, these things must first be in you, and then abound; flow out in a clear manifestation or development of the things which God has wrought in you, and thus you are to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," as well as all other things that pertain to life and godliness, not forgetting that "it is God that worketh in you to will and to do, of his good pleasure." Then remember, brethren, that "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work." 2 Cor. ix. 18. "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

I have thus far dwelt upon the context and other connections in the scriptures, to show the principle upon, and the sense in which we are to make our calling and election sure; for certain it is, that we can make them no more sure in God's eternal act and unfrustrable counsel, than they already are, for we do know, "That the counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."- Psalm xxxiii. 11; Prov. xix. 21; Isa. xlv. 10, 11. "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love;" and this glorious object seems to have been "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." In the development of that purpose, and in order to make known to the church that "manifold wisdom," "holy men of God" were inspired by the Spirit of the living God, and by the light and power of that Spirit, "spake (and wrote the scriptures) as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Hence, we have in the scriptures all that is necessary to instruct us in relation to doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. We have, therefore, placed before us, a fair record, a perfect school-book, written out in legible characters, and fraught with all the necessary instruction whereby we are to make our calling and election sure.

But thus far, it is written only on paper, and the child destitute of capacities to receive the necessary tuition, might rustle the sheets, and gaze upon the pictures and characters, until the whole would be obliterated, and yet be none the wiser. This is a record of spiritual things; and we by nature are not spiritual, and therefore, so far as spiritual capacities are concerned, "without understanding," we "see not, we hear not," see Jer. v. 21; Rom. i. 31, and iii. 11; are "without strength," Rom. v. 6; "past feeling," Eph. iv. 19; and "have not life," 1 John v. 12. Let us, for a moment, imagine a school-teacher, placing himself before a set of individuals situated naturally, as the above described ones are spiritually, presenting his books containing letters, words, sentences, rules, &c. He commences by saying to them, "Now look, that you may have eyes to see; listen, that you may have ears to hear; do as these rules direct you, that you may understand them; feel their force, that you may have sensitive powers; do as they command you, that you may have life."

What would we think of such a teacher? Would he not exhibit the most palpable insanity? And yet, not a particle more than do the whole posse of the work-mongrel priesthood, in calling upon sinners, who are "dead in sin," to see, hear, understand, feel and do, that they may get spiritual or eternal life, and go to heaven by it.

When such teachers undertake to inculcate the principles of the "Book of the generation of Jesus Christ," they commit most egregious errors, and no marvel. How can we expect a man to teach others correctly, what he does not understand himself? When they know not what they teach, or whereof they affirm, are "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own," we need not wonder at their sad mistakes. It is as clear as the brilliant noonday, that they have not

even learned their alphabet in that book. Hence, they mistake g for w; r for o; a for r; c for k; and e for s. Nor are they any better skilled in the pronunciation of words; hence, they pronounce, in their way of teaching, g-r-a-c-e - works. This leads to miserable mistakes in the construction of sentences; sometimes by placing wrong words in them, as "by works ye are saved, through the acts of the creature;" and then leaving out important ones, as, "and that of yourselves, it is the *sale* of God." And again, "By works of righteousness which we have done," and changing again, "Come unto me all ye ends of the earth," see Eph. ii. 8,9; Tit. iii. 5; Isa. xlv. 22. And then adding again, "work out your own souls' salvation;" and, "This is the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." "He tasted death for every man." &c. Phil. ii. 12; John i. 9; Heb. ii. 9.

This is truly a "turning things upside down" with a vengeance; and, the generation of Jesus Christ should be very careful not to place themselves under the tuition of such teachers, for in so doing, they will be certain to learn bad habits in spelling, pronouncing, reading and understanding; and all good, practical teachers, have found out that it is easier to take children in the A B C, and teach them good habits than to disentangle them from bad ones, after they are once acquired.

Let us turn away, then, from those soul-sickening teachers, and repair to Him who "taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes;" who spake as man never spake.

He commences by giving his apostles eternal life; "the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." John xvii. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 12. He opens the eyes of the blind, and unstops the ears of the deaf, Isa. xxxv. 5; he opens the understanding that we may understand the scriptures, Luke xxiv. 45, and speaks unto us the words of instruction; he gives us feeling sensibilities, by which we are made to hunger and thirst after spiritual supplies, and then presents them to us; and of his fullness have all we received and grace for grace. John i. 16.

Having thus prepared the school-book, containing all the necessary lessons to be learned, the rules and regulations by which the school is to be conducted, and given us an introduction to the Teacher, with most convincing testimonials of his competency to manage the entire department, after furnishing a suitable building, with all the necessary articles of clothing, food, and drink, and all "without money and without price;" we having tasted that he is gracious in the introduction, by which taste we have been so charmed, and all our affections are set on things above, (the earthly, weak and beggarly elements, taught by those earthly teachers, in earthly theological departments,) and not on things of the earth.

The superiority and excellency of those things above, together with the superlative glory, beauty and loveliness of the Instructor, when contrasted with the remaining stock of earthly ones that we have on hand, and with the degradation, ugliness and hatefulness of the teachers that inculcate them, present to our minds an amazing difference.

In examining the contrast, while the earthly things hang as a heavy and wearisome load upon us, we sigh and groan, being burdened, and then pant for a larger supply, and more thorough knowledge of heavenly ones.

In that acceptable time, when our aspirations are all on the wing, the teacher is heard to say, "Learn of me." Now is the time to take our book, and "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure."

J. F. JOHNSON.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." 2 Peter 1.10.

As already intimated, it would be preposterous, as well as sinfully presuming, in us to attempt to make our calling and election more sure in God's act and purpose than is already done. The eternal standing in, and indissoluble union with Christ, being settled facts, proved to be such by former quotations from the scriptures, there must be other senses in which we are to make them so. The first and important lesson for us to learn is, to make our calling and election sure or manifest to ourselves; and secondly, to our brethren.

"Am I his, or am I not?" is a question of deep and vital interest to the christian. Let us, therefore, place the book before our eyes, and in the presence of the Teacher, who is always at hand, (see Heb. xiii. 5,) and with fervent desire look to and ask of him (for he will be sought unto by the house of Israel) to open our understandings, afford us light - for it is only in his light we see light - supply us with the requisite wisdom, which he giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and then candidly, carefully and impartially search the divine record, and examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, "prove our own selves," and we may rest assured that what he has written once he will write again; not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart. Then every particular item wherein the two records correspond with each other affords an evidence of our calling and election.

Let us repair "to the law and to the testimony," and compare notes. In the first place, the Lord, as before remarked, has inspired holy men of God, and those men have spoken and recorded facts "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and under his supervision it is written with ink that God is holy, just and good, and that he has given to man a law like himself, and that we have rebelled against him, transgressed his law, and thereby became sinners, and wandered far off from him. Our God is the God of truth, and says his people shall know the truth, and therefore commences a record in the fleshly tables of the heart corresponding with the one written with ink; and thus by the Spirit of the living God, his

holiness, goodness and justice; the justice of his holy law, and our rebellion and sinfulness in the transgression of that law, are indelibly impressed upon our hearts. It is written with ink, "They shall mourn, weep, lament, and be sorrowful." The elected and called of God have witnessed these sensations, and they only. There are two sources of grief and lamentation connected with this condition of the child of God. One, a sense of our ingratitude and rebellion against him whose goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our lives; the other, a conviction of our justly condemned state by a righteous and holy law.

Now it is written in our hearts, as it was with ink, that we are sinners far off from God, "without strength;" and then comes the mourning, weeping, lamentation and sorrowing. How could it be otherwise? The Spirit that dictated the book is making us feel the force of its truth; and we can fully endorse the language of the poet:

"My lips with shame my sins confess,
Against thy law, before thy face;
Lord, should thy judgments grow severe,
I am condemned, but thou art clear.

Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce thee just in death;
And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well."

But the corresponding record goes on. We feel that we are "without strength;" our formerly supposed powers are all prostrated, and we could as easily call a world like this out of chaos, as prepare ourselves for heaven.

It is written that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Now we feel it written again. It is suggested in the book that the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots, as easily as we can do good or make ourselves so. The writing in our hearts confirms the fact. It is written in the book that no man can come unto Christ except the Father draw him. We feel the incontrovertible fact impressed deeply in our hearts, as by the power of the living God of Israel. It is written in the book that his people "believe according to the working of his mighty power." Engraven upon the heart is the same truth, as with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever. It is written in the book that, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus. The same sentiment is indelibly stamped in our hearts by the Spirit.

It is written, too, in the book, that ours is "the faith of the operation of God." We are taught by the same Spirit to know that the record is true, and adopt the words of the poet:

"O could I but believe,
Then all would easy be,
I would, but cannot; Lord, relieve,
My help must come from thee."

The book testifies that we are "an afflicted and poor people," and that many are the afflictions of the righteous. Now we are sensible of it, while we writhe under the handwriting of the Spirit. It is further written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them;" and while the Spirit impresses our total failure upon the heart, we quail before the anathemas of Sinai. This people is represented in the book as hungering and thirsting after righteousness; they labor and are heavy laden, and are poor in spirit, &c. Here are holy desires, a restlessness and sensibility of the magnitude of our numerous transgressions and exceeding sinfulness, and conviction of our innate poverty in relation to spiritual things, all penned down in the heart by the same Spirit, that dictated them in the former record.

We have exhibited some of the many features of the dark side of the picture, and although not so pleasant to witness, yet it is as essentially necessary that we should know them, and they present as clear and incontestable evidences of our calling and election, as do the brighter and more pleasant features.

It is needful that we pass through these trying ordeals, that we may know the depth of our thralldom, and be the better qualified to appreciate the power and riches of grace in our salvation. And therefore, "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." And the Savior said, "Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Let us then peruse the sacred record, and be assured that a brighter picture gilds the heaven-inspired pages; and instead of the bitter waters of "Marah," and the temptation and strife of Massah and Meribah, streamlets sweeter than nectar shall flow from the soul-soothing river, to gladden and replenish the downcast and weary pilgrim. And if the dark lines of our sinfulness, the gloomy portrait of our apostasy, and the sable cloud of indictive wrath have lowered round our pathway, as delineated in the faithful pages, and impressed in the fleshly tables of the heart by the Spirit, have caused our sinking spirits to wail and wither within us; on the other hand the lucid light of Zion shall loom up in the highway to gild the holy oracles, whereby we may behold the righteousness of God imputed to his people - their sins and sorrows laid upon the Redeemer, who by a timely and all-sufficient offering and satisfactory sacrifice met all the claims of inflexible justice, buried all the sins and removed the curse forever from his bride, and caused this soul-ravishing truth to be written out in lines of living brilliancy, for a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Nor are they written on the sacred pages alone, or in vain. They must hallow and illuminate the hearts of his children; for the Light of Zion has said, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth

as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." He will, therefore, put his laws in the minds, and write them in the hearts of his children.

How many hearts have been made to leap with joy, and swell the gentle, lovely and melodious song of praise to God and the Lamb, while the Comforter, "the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive," penned the consoling truth in the hearts of Zion's children; thus demonstrating, beyond the power of successful contradiction, their calling and election.

It is written with ink, "He shall save his people from their sins;" and while the blessed Spirit is writing the same fact in the heart, the enraptured child can exclaim with Isaiah, "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." It is written in the book, "By grace are ye saved." And when again inscribed in the heart, we cheerfully endorse the language of Kent, and say:

"He needs no creature power or skill,
His finished work to mend;
But works his own eternal will,
As wisdom did intend."

It also is written with ink, that those who mourn, weep, lament and are sorrowful, shall rejoice and be comforted. And when the joy-inspiring theme is recorded in the heart, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. "Our tongues break out in unknown strains, and sing surprising grace." It is further written, that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. And when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, we receive the consoling impress there, and are taught to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God.

"Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy from heaven to earth came down."

Those who are reported in the book as being far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, and it is further recorded, "They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them." How precisely are these records rewritten in the hearts of the Lord's called and chosen ones, and with mingled notes of melody and united songs of harmony they hymn the high praises of their great Deliverer when brought to the banqueting house, where they behold the banner of his love over them. It is written with ink, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In the handwriting of the Spirit of this record upon the fleshly table, the subjects find themselves blessed indeed; blessed with life - eternal life - and all the sensitive powers and faculties of life.

Hence they feel their malady, and the healing efficacy of the "fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." They see their sinfulness, the justice of their condemnation, and the glorious way in which the ungodly are justified. They hear the awful denunciation of Sinai, and the joyful sound of the gospel, while it proclaims in heavenly accents the salvation of the sinner. They taste the bitter dregs of affliction, and drink refreshing draughts from the wells of salvation, while they taste, also, that the Lord is very gracious. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This fact, also, is impressed in the hearts of the called and chosen. The love we have for the children of the kingdom proves to us that it is OUR kingdom. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." O that we could feel more of the seraphic flame, we would, with the poet, sing:

"I love her gates, I love the road,
The church adorned with grace,
Stands like a palace built for God,
To show his milder face."

Dear brethren, in this scanty scribble we can but touch upon a few of the very many parallel passages as they stand penned down in the two places of record. May these important sketches encourage you to take your precious schoolbook, and give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Do be careful to be found at the "building" in the time of school hours. Do not mistake the place: it is "a building of God - a house not made with hands - diverse in all particulars from the brick-and-slime Babel towers built up by the hands of work-mongers, and filled with the relicts of Mystery, Babylon. If you will carefully consult your schoolbook and preceptor, you can easily discriminate between the two houses. One requires, in the first place, many principals or instructors - yes, "legions," and many laborers, and much toil in traveling to hunt up and prepare materials for the building, and large funds to qualify and equip the travelers for their respective missions, some on horseback, some in chariots, some in galley-boats, and some in gallant ships; for they compass sea and land to find and prepare the materials of which it is composed, for they have been now almost six thousand years at "indefatigable labor," and it is not done yet. Somehow or other a misunderstanding in language, or some other unforeseen obstruction, impedes the progress of the building.

The other house requires but one Principal, but one Builder, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall finish it." "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it." He requires no laborious toil in preparing the materials, nor wearisome journey to find them. "He speaks, and it is done, he commands, and it stands fast." He says to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, and lo, they come with weeping, and with supplication he leads them. He teaches to them a

pure language, that they may call upon his name and serve him with one consent. His watchmen lift up the voice, with the voice together they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, so that when the materials are brought together there need not be heard the sound of a tool among them, for the Master Builder displays the superior workmanship in preparing all the materials to fit and fill their respective places in the building.

"What though the gates of hell withstood,
Yet must this building rise;
'Tis thy own work, Almighty God,
And wondrous in our eyes."

In concluding our remarks for the present, let me suggest to you, brethren, that by attending to the few corresponding records brought to view in the foregoing communication, and the many that you will find by consulting your school-book, and then giving the witnesses an impartial hearing, you will discover abundant testimonials by which you may make your calling and election sure to yourselves; and when that is done an important point is gained, and we are then prepared to proceed to the next item.

J. F. JOHNSON.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." 2 Peter 1.10.

We now propose examining the second point in our proposition, which is, To make our calling and election sure to the brethren. With this is connected the whole of our intercourse as christians, while on our earthly pilgrimage, as well as the enjoyment, reciprocity and perpetuity of the social fellowship, union and communion, the mutuality of which is so consoling and interesting to the children of Zion; and it is a matter of deep regret in this day of darkness and lukewarmness, that so many of the Lord's redeemed and regenerated children should pay so little regard to a duty that is so essential to their comfort and edification, and at the same time, so easily performed; while the neglect of it exhibits so much disrespect toward that dearest friend, who sticketh closer than a brother. But, alas! Too many of such, we fear, are to be found, both in the church and out of it.

My dear brethren, I would to God that this feeble effort of mine could reach, and touch, and stir up your minds, and influence you for the sake of Him who has loved you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood, "to show yourselves," exhibit the testimonials of your calling and election, and thereby encourage and comfort your

brethren who love you, and mourn about the neglected streets and desolated courts of Zion, in consequence of your absence and backwardness by which you fail to make your calling and election sure to your brethren, and force them to stand in doubt of you, lest there has been "labor bestowed upon you in vain."

But are you ready to ask the question, How are we to make our calling and election sure? We answer, briefly, by giving a reason of the hope that is in you, by producing the "fruits of the Spirit," by walking in the ordinances, and obeying the commandments of the Lord, and thus prove your relation to your Father, your loyalty to your King, your devotion to his cause, and your love to your brethren.

As before observed, the apostle has shown us from whom the gift of all things that pertain to life and godliness proceeds. Faith is pointed out in the scriptures as being one of those important gifts. The gift and the power to exercise it being bestowed, we are to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. Now, where we see those heavenly fruits portrayed, we have evidences of the implantation of a heavenly root, or principle, from whence they proceed, and hence a testimony of the election of the possessor. We are not, therefore, to content ourselves with the bare possession of the gifts of the Spirit, (much less with the naked profession,) but we must prove that we have them - show them by our works. The first Baptist that ever was on earth, required fruits before he would baptize; and the most conspicuous Baptist that ever heaven or earth knew, chose and ordained his disciples, that they should go and bring fruit, and that their fruit should remain. It is only by the fruit that we can judge correctly of the quality of the tree, whether good or bad, "By their fruits shall ye know them."

But why are these fruits, or evidences, of our calling and election withheld from the church? Why so many candles placed under a bushel? There certainly can be no justifiable reason for it.

Is it because it is a day of darkness, and the love of many wax cold? That affords us no plea for a dereliction in our duty. It is a matter beyond our control. The Lord "maketh darkness and it is night," and night it will and must be, until it pleases him to dispel the mental gloom. But, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." And although every approximation we make toward the practice of will-worshippers in kindling fires, and compassing ourselves about with sparks of our own kindling, shall result in our lying down in sorrow, is it possible that the highly favored children of grace can rest contented, sitting down in supineness, and withholding every evidence of their calling and election from the family of the faithful, neglecting the solemn duties, and disobeying the positive commands of the King of Zion, by forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, and sinfully disregarding the ordinances of God's house, which is so wisely constructed, so abundantly furnished, and so suitably adapted every way for the accommodation and comfort of ourselves and brethren?

Brethren, suppose the curtains of darkness are closed around you, and no cheering beam from the Sun of Righteousness appears to penetrate the mental gloom, or illuminate the lower hemisphere? Is it reasonable to suppose that by absenting yourselves from your Father's house at any time, you will enhance your own enjoyment, or that of your brethren? You will find yourselves miserably mistaken if you think so. I cannot conclude that the children of God feel best while neglecting their duty, but have thought that no one circumstance has been attended with more gloomy and discouraging prospects to the church of Christ, than that of her children forsaking her in dark and cold seasons. How trying to the faithful few who frequent her neglected courts at such a time! Then it is that the enemy pours contempt upon her apparently languishing cause, and tauntingly asks, "Where is their God?" Surely, brethren, our presence is most needed at such a time. O that we could feel more of the love and sympathy that the captive children of Israel felt when they sat by the rivers of Babylon, and wept when they remembered Zion, saying, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

Let us not forsake our beloved Zion, in the hour of adversity, but rally to her standard and link our destiny with hers, as hers is with her Savior's. If her children rejoice, we will rejoice with them, and if to the contrary, let us "weep with them that weep." There is a mournful and solemn sweetness in the commingling of our sympathetic tears in the gloomy and sorrowful night.

How consoling would it be, when visiting her courts, to see all her members present, faithfully filling their places in her temples, and thereby, manifesting their love to her cause and King, their brotherly kindness to each other, being knit together in that love which constitutes one of the strongest proofs of our calling and election; "For love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God;" and again, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." And the Savior has said, "By this shall all know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

But how are all to know that we are his disciples, unless we prove that we love one another by our actions. Then, brethren, let me beseech you, for the sake of your own enjoyment, and the encouragement of your brethren, to step out from your hiding-places, regardless of the coldness and darkness that is complained of; for if it is night, and a cold night, it appears not to be a tempestuous one. If the warring elements were all in commotion, and the raging tempest rocking our bark over the furious billows, or war raging to an alarming extent in the kingdom, it would not seem marvelous that timid ones should seek some quiet retreat from the storm, or leave the ranks to shun the battle. But, even in those cases, they would betray a great lack of courage, or an unjustifiable cowardice. And what would make the matter of fear still worse, a want of courage and a cowardice when they have the most infallible evidences of complete safety, and a final and triumphant victory.

O, brethren, don't be driven from your posts by the lowering cloud, the howling tempest or the invading foe. They are all completely under the sovereign control of your Deliverer, and all work for your good. There is no darkness or gloom so thick or dross that can remain when the Light of Zion shall loom around you. Don't be discouraged then, but wait patiently for your Lord's coming, and with all confidence submissively sing,

"Are darkness and distress my share?
Give me to trust thy guardian care;
Enough for me, if love divine,
At length through every cloud shall shine,"

and rest assured, he will come and will not tarry. Fear not the raging tempest, though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, till the mountains shake with their swelling; your God is omnipotent, and can shut up the winds in the chambers of his power, and hold the waters in the hollow of his hand; therefore, you can still sing,

"'Tis by thy strength the mountains stand,
God of eternal power;
The sea grows calm at thy command,
And tempests cease to roar."

What though the enemy come in like a flood, never fear; your uniform and armor will shield you from all danger in that case. "Stand, therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God," and with this panoply, one can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

In conclusion, the apostle tells us, "For if ye do these things; ye shall never fall." And what if we do not? Why, then, we may expect to fall, of course. I have had quite a good many falls myself, and been pretty badly hurt sometimes, and have known others to fall, and receive severe wounds and bruises, and suffer much; and generally by leaving the track, and getting out among the rubbish, especially when it is somewhat dark, and they are not willing to "wait upon the Lord." Others undertake to "kindle a fire" and "walk in the light" of that, and in the sparks they have kindled; and they have to lie down in sorrow. Others again take after a "Will-o'-the-wisp," or some other false light, or "dark lantern," and receive hard falls that way, and quite serious injuries. Sometimes, perhaps, the Lord orders our steps so that we fall for our good. But in all the falls of christians that

I have ever known or read in our old school book, not one has proved fatal, nor ever will, for the Teacher has said, they, "shall never die." I would not aggravate the wounds of those who fall, but purpose a remedy and conclude. An excellent one is found in the 7th chapter, 8th and 9th verses of Micah. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; for when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness."

Most truly, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

P. S. In looking over the third number, present volume, of the SIGNS, I see that my esteemed brother, Elder J. W. Thomas, of Indiana, has requested my views on Col. i. 28. As I fear that I am occupying more space in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES than is justly due me, or profitable to the readers, I must crave his indulgence for a short time, after which, (although I feel more like asking instruction of Eld. Thomas than giving,) I am willing to give such views as I may have.

J. F. J.

Colossians 1:27,28.

Warwick, Orange Co., N. Y., April 15, 1857.

BROTHER BEEBE: - After so long a time, I will endeavor to comply with the request of Eld. J. W. Thomas, of Indiana, found in No. 3, of the present volume of the SIGNS, but will first say that after writing the request, brother T., in a private letter, requested my views on the 27th, as well as the 28th verse of the 1st chapter of the epistle to the church at Colosse. There is a mystery named in the connection, but said to be made known to the saints among the Gentiles. Whatever may be my claim to that endearing name, I must confess that if the mystery is made known to me in any degree, it is "only in part."

Elder T., however, is too well acquainted with me to suppose that I can comprehend and explain all the *hows* and *wherefores* of that sublime mystery. This epistle, like all the rest, is directed to, and designed for the special and exclusive benefit of "the saints," to whom only, the mystery is made known. It is a hidden mystery "which God ordained before the world, unto our glory." 1 Cor. iii. 6. And that we may know the secret place of its concealment, the apostle informs us that it is one, which, from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, beyond the scan of mortal vision, outside of the range of the science of men, and far, far

beyond the reach of the profoundest wisdom of this world. Christ Jesus, to raise a rich revenue of glory to his adorable name, has reserved the revelation of this mystery to himself, and therefore says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." And further, he has declared that, "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."

The destiny of God has assigned to all beings and things the spheres in which his creative and controlling power has placed them; and as easily could we cause the aqueous tribes to live without water, and the aerial ones without air; as soon could the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as man could raise himself from the natural sphere in which God's creative power has placed him to fill, and move in a spiritual or higher order of the existence of God, and perform the work which he has reserved to his own omnipotent self, for the exhibition of his own glory. What audacity, then, and what barefaced presumption is daily developed in the new theological schools and synagogues, which are so eagerly engaged in trying to fill every corner of the earth with bantlings of anti-christ, who are industriously endeavoring to wrest the diadem from the "Head of the church," and crown arrogant mortals as the instruments, and their money and measures as the efficient means by which men are to be raised to spiritual life, a knowledge of God, and the use and enjoyment of heavenly or spiritual things. But the apostle says, "To whom (the saints) God would make known." Unlike the graceless work-mongers, rag-baby peddlers, grab-bag gamblers, filthy lucre changers, and soul-dealing traffickers of our day, the apostle ascribes to God the work of making known this mystery. Not to a god who would if he could, but has to wait for the use of human means, but one who speaks and it is done; who commands and it stands fast; at whose sovereign mandate the heavens above must bow, and the earth beneath tremble, and "cast out the dead;" he speaks, and the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live; and the love-touched heart shall leap and rejoice, and the penitent believe. By this gift of eternal life, or being made partakers of the divine nature, we are raised to a higher or spiritual order of existence, and the consequences, faculties or senses, corresponding with that life, follow in their train; such as (spiritual) sensations to feel, eyes to see, ears to hear, and capacities to understand, and therefore prepared to appreciate in a degree, "What is the riches of the glory of this mystery." It is now suggested to my mind whether I should not lay aside my pen and sit in silent wonder, rather than to attempt to delineate the riches of the all-glorious mystery; for well I know that my poor, feeble capacities, with the best language that I can command, are too imbecile to do half justice to the divine theme. Herein is manifested the never-to-be-broken bond of union that seats up our destiny with that of him "who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature;" and here is revealed within us the mighty power by which we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The Savior, in giving us a portrait of the mutuality and reciprocity of this glory of his with his chosen, has said to his Father, "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one as we are one." The whole glory of the celestial world is here revealed within, and guaranteed to us.

"Here's love and joy that will not waste,
Here's treasures that endure;
Here's pleasures that will always last,
When time shall be no more."

O the depth of the riches of that glory! How heart-thrilling the hope, that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," as sure as God is competent to execute his will and sustain his counsel. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." "We shall be satisfied when we awake with his likeness." And this wondrous work is to take place "among the Gentiles," too. Unlike the typical and transient glory of the first covenant, which was done away in Christ, and which was confined to the fleshly descendants of Abraham, or the patterns of things in the heavens, and restricted to the limited boundaries of Palestine, these heavenly things themselves are enriched and glorified with the glory the all-glorious Mediator had with the Father before the world was; purified and redeemed with the blood of the everlasting covenant, the wide-spread riches and glory of which are unbounded by mountains, seas, or territorial limits, from the northern to the southern pole, the eastern and the western hemispheres must yield up the purchase of his blood, at the mandate of him who says to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons, from far, and my daughters from the ends of the world." Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people."

The apostle next proceeds to divulge the glorious mystery, "Which is Christ in you the hope of glory."

"A scheme too profound for a seraph to pry,
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high."

Here, too, our feeble powers must fail to express the heights and depths of this amazing mystery. O wonder of wonders! That the pure, spotless and unsullied Son of God, whose celestial glory gleams throughout, and gilds all heaven, shedding its supernatural brilliancy o'er all the glorified myriads who bow before and pay reverence there, should stoop down here to this polluted world, and take his residence in this loathsome and sin-defiled temple; and although he walks in us and dwells in us continually, amid this sink of sin, and the incessant din of war, waged by the world, the flesh and the devil, he remains unadulterated by the former and unscathed by the latter.

The former is made to vanish at the touch of his precious and efficacious blood, and the enemies to quail beneath his victorious two-edged sword. Having been purified with his blood, we are kept by his mighty power; our place of defense is the munition of rocks. The impregnable walls of salvation defend us, and thus is secured to us "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." A hope of glory resting upon the best of bases. An offering and a sacrifice acceptable to God; a righteousness adequate to the utmost requisitions of the law; a life, sufferings and death commensurate with the broadest demands of justice; a victory complete, secured by a triumphant resurrection over the allied powers of earth and hell combined; and an entrance into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God as our ever-prevalent Advocate; all contribute to the establishment of the christian's hope, which form a sufficient anchorage for every one who believes on, and trusts in Christ.

"Whom we preach." While all others are preaching themselves, in some shape or other, as vicegerents, helpers, co-workers, or instruments to aid their feeble and dependent gods in the salvation of such as they would save if they could, we [the Old School Baptists] alone, preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves the servants of his children for his sake. What a disparity between the way we preach Christ, and that which the land-and-sea compassers profess to preach him! While we preach Christ to sinners, and in them the hope of glory, they vainly endeavor to preach sinners to him, whom they represent as being outside, knocking for admittance, and would get in if the sinner would open his heart and let him. While they preach the "free will" of the "free agent," as the great hinge, upon which hangs his salvation, we preach Christ the power and wisdom of God, who is fully competent to accomplish all his Father's will, and save all that he gave him with an everlasting salvation. This is the Christ whom we preach.

"Warning every man." When we have "Christ in us," we are blessed with new sensations, desires and faculties; new powers of comprehension and discrimination; in short, a new religion, requiring new and different services from our old religion and its services. The implantation of this new man, with his new faculties, services, &c., however, does not destroy, nor remodel the old man, which is still corrupt, nor his religion and religious services, which are all antagonistical to the religion and exercises of the new. Every man possessing the new, therefore, is to be warned against the deleterious workings of the old. This old man is a deceitful old fellow, and it is not the easiest matter for us at all times to discriminate between his counterfeit religion and works, and those of the new man. He can put on a voluntary humility, and groan, and snivel, and cry, and whine, and mourn over sinners, and beg money to build theological seminaries, and labor, and travel, compassing land and sea, ostensibly for the purpose of helping God to save sinners, but really for his own aggrandizement, and gathering into his drag his ill-gotten earthly treasures, filched alike from the unsuspecting rich, the poor, the widow and the orphan; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men; having a form of godliness, but denying the power. We are then to warn the Lord's spiritual

family, every man of them against every approximation to that workmongrel will-worship that would debase the Lord to the humble position of a beggar, and stay his work until year after year passes by, while they are preparing themselves (the wire-workers of that religion) for the ministry, and while, they say, thousands are perishing for want of a preached gospel. From such, turn away; for their coming is after the working of Satan, with power, signs, lying wonders, and deceivableness of unrighteousness; whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things; are ever trying to wield the helm of earthly governments, and exalt themselves above God, and sit in his seat. Against such, Christ and his apostles have given us many specimens of faithful warning. See Mat. xxii. 12-15; Acts xx. 20-31; Phil. iii. 2; 2 Tim. iv. 1-4; 1 John iv. 1-3; 3 John 9th and 10th verses.

"Teaching every man." The teaching, like the warning, is to be extended and restricted to every man of the spiritual family, as it is the inculcation of spiritual knowledge; and the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them. Every one, then, who has spiritual life to actuate, ears to hear, eyes to see, and capacities to receive and appreciate spiritual things, is to be taught to observe, all things whatsoever Christ has commanded his disciples. The scriptures are replete with all things profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. With that thorough furnishing before us, we are to oppose every intruder who comes with a doctrine or practice for which there is not a "thus saith the Lord." The observances of this rule has "cut the cable" between us and every new school innovation, and must continue to do so in all ages to come. The disciples, therefore, are to be taught this doctrine and practice, so clearly exhibited in the scriptures.

"In all wisdom." The all wisdom here spoken of is evidently to be understood as embracing that wisdom, and that only, "which is from above." For we are taught in the 2nd chapter of the 1st epistle, to the Corinthians, that it is 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. We are to speak wisdom among them that are perfect, (in Christ,) yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which comes 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. If any of us lack wisdom, then let us keep away from the New School synagogues, and ask it of God. From that heavenly source we will get it pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without that partial intolerance, or that politico-religious, hypocritical, pharisaic, would-be-wise bigotry, that is so rife in the latter-day synagogues of Satan, and so laboriously inculcated by that wisdom which "descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish." May we then, while blessed with the privilege, ever be found engaged in the practice of lying at the feet of Jesus, and asking that heavenly wisdom of him.

"That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The apostle has not required us to make them perfect in Christ Jesus, nor to present them perfect in themselves. He had been taught of God to know that we could make them neither more nor less, better nor worse in Christ, than they had ever been. See Col. ii. 10: And ye are complete in Him, &c. He has taught us that they were chosen in Christ Jesus before this world or the sin of it could pollute them; and Jude informs us that they are "preserved " there lest it should. And, that we may present them to each other for their comfort, and the mutual enjoyment of that faith which is the gift of God, that love which is shed abroad in their hearts, that fellowship which the Lord has blessed them with, and that everlasting consolation and good hope through grace which is also given them, we are faithfully to teach them the necessity of their daily presenting to each other the testimonials of their calling and election, to prove that they are the recipients of that grace that teaches us, "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. As we are assured by the apostle, that Christ, by one offering, perfected them that are sanctified, we hazard nothing when we present every man belonging to the spiritual household, perfect in Christ Jesus. Yes, every man, for our faithful covenant-keeping Savior cheers us with heaven's own dialect, saying, "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Falling finally from grace does not apply to this family. The gates of hell shall never prevail against, nor receive one of them. The chains of darkness are reserved for those whose "spot is not the spot of his (Christ's) children," and over whom the second death has power. Over his it hath none.

"Though twice ten thousand sinners go,
Down to the shades of endless woe,
His love from all mutation free,
The guard of his elect shall be.

From Jesus neither fire nor flood,
Shall rend the purchase of his blood;
Whom he redeemed with him shall rise,
To fill a mansion in the skies."

Brother Thomas, the foregoing are my views on the subject, imperfectly sketched as they are, and, if yourself or any others of the household of faith should receive either comfort or instruction there from, I shall be fully compensated.

Respectfully submitted first, to the consideration and disposition of Elder Beebe, and if he pleases, to all who may feel interested in reading them.

Your brother, truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Obituary And Sketch Of The Life Of Sister Josinah Hickman.

Warwick, Orange Co., N. Y., June 17, 1857.

BROTHER BEEBE: - Will you oblige me with a space in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES for the publication of the following brief sketch of the life and decease of a venerable and much esteemed mother in Israel?

I wish to say a little more than should be claimed in the obituary department of your paper, with the hope that a concise portrait of her rare and useful life may prove to be a source of encouragement or profit to the household of faith generally, and to her very numerous offspring particularly, as there have been, are, and I think ought to be, many of them members of the Old School Baptist Church.

Sister Josinah Hickman was the daughter of Jacob Van Meter, a wealthy and respectable farmer, who lived (when I first knew him) near Lancaster, Ohio, the consort of Elder Joshua Hickman, deceased, and the grandmother of my departed companion. She died on the 3rd day of June, 1857, aged 90 years.

The first account that I can now give of her history is, that she, with her husband, removed from the Youghiogeny River, above Pittsburgh, Pa., to the northwestern part of Virginia, in an early day, when many of the emigrants to that place were exposed to the tomahawk, scalping-knife, and other ravages of the red man of the forest.

My father removed from Fauquier to Monongalia County, Va., when I was but three years old, and was kindly received in her house and lodged on the premises until he selected and purchased a farm for himself in the neighborhood. There I had the first testimonials of her virtuous life, her benevolent heart and her liberal hand. There I first knew the interesting family with whom I have been intimately acquainted ever since. In whose social circles I spent many of the most pleasant days of my youth, and of whom it may be said (a number of them) in after years; We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company.

The Lord blessed her with plenty of this world's goods, and many a sufferer has been made to rejoice in her liberal distribution of the same for their relief. I have heard her almost chided for her liberality to the poor, who were thought to be undeserving of her favors, when she would say, "If there is nothing else to claim our charity, they are a part

of the human race." In my first acquaintance with her she was a member, with my parents, of Prickets Creek Church, in the county and state before named. Her husband, pastor of the church, was extensively known through Western Virginia, and highly appreciated as a prominent, an able and useful Old School Baptist minister, which he continued to be up to the close of his ministerial career in Indiana. Their removal to that country followed very close to that of my own, which took place in 1829. There they united with Lebanon Church, in Henry County, in 1830; and in June of the same year the writer of this article was baptized, and became a member of the same church. For twenty-six years I remained a member with her, and can fully testify to the steadfastness of her faith. With her I have passed through some fiery ordeals, particularly in the means division, and on other occasions, but never knew her to waver. Even at the advanced age of eighty years, when that division took place, she seemed to scan and detect the fallacy of the doctrine as with an eagle's eye, and gave place to it "not for an hour." She had a penetrating judgment and a ready mind. The Bible was her text-book, and she had that wisdom afforded her that taught her how to use it, both in defending the truth and stopping the mouths of gainsayers. In the last conversation I had with her on the subject of her pilgrimage, she informed me that the church to which she belonged, in Virginia, held their meetings monthly at her husband's residence for forty-three years in succession, and that she supposed there were few women "this side of the Red Sea" who had waited on the Baptists more than she had, and that none took more pleasure in doing so. During a considerable portion of that forty-three years her house was the principal place where I attended meeting; and often have I witnessed her incessant labors to accommodate her friends, both with temporal and spiritual things. But she now rests. The scowling tempests have all passed over; all is calm - all serene. My oldest son (J. A. Johnson) was the first one that her father saw of the fifth generation from, and including herself. The venerable man was quite lively and well pleased on the occasion, remarking to me that he had then descendants enough living to constitute an army.

My oldest daughter's only child is the first one living of a like generation from her; and if my much esteemed mother-in-law and dear companion had been preserved on the earth as late as was their venerable mother, she could have said, what I have heard of another, "Arise, my daughter, and go to your daughter, for your daughter's daughter has a daughter." She has left four sons, three daughters, and numerous relatives to survive her. Shall I say to mourn her departure? O no, my friends, let us not mourn. Her faithful Shepherd kept her as the apple of his eye, until she was fully ripe for her removal from a world of woe, and transplantation in a higher, holier, happier sphere. I have not learned the particular circumstances of her departure, but feel well assured that death had no sting for her.

A very few years ago a New School Baptist visited her, from Virginia, and remarked to her with much apparent sanctity, that he supposed she thought much about dying. "O no," she replied, "that is not my business, but his who placed me here; and it is mine to do

the best I can while here. I don't think near as much about it as I did when I was young." Few have lived, in this age of quick passages through life, to see so numerous an offspring as has our dear old mother. Few in ordinary life have moved in a larger circle of devoted friends, and very few have lived more completely beyond the reach of reproach. Such was her devotion to the cause of her Master, such her untiring toil and care for the relief of suffering humanity, both in the bodily and mental woes to which we are incident, that no tongue dared to reproach her where she was known. Dear brethren, let us follow the footsteps of such.

Your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

An Article Copied from the "Southern Baptist Messenger."

Muncie, Delaware Co., Ind., Oct. 15, 1857.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - I find by noticing some of the religious periodicals of the day, that there are those professing to be of the old order of Primitive Baptists, who are holding out flags of truce to our enemies, and the enemies to the truth, (the New School Baptists,) with the hope, I suppose, of enlisting under their lead a more numerous train of followers; and I, for one, am willing to be rid of those who are figuring in the contemplated confederacy, so far as my knowledge extends, for I know of none who are leading off in the conspiracy who have not heretofore proved themselves to be restless spirits and ambitious aspirants for the mastery, and have caused more perplexity, strife and grief amongst the Baptists, than ever they have been, or ever they will be able to balance, by all the profit they have ever been, or ever will be to us, should they live a thousand years, and follow the zigzag wanderings that have characterized their course up to the present time. I have no disposition whatever, therefore, to court the stay or crave the company of those individuals; nor would I now write three lines across this sheet to secure their residence among us, or the residence of those who can with them amalgamate with the new order of Arminian Baptists, while understanding their position. But, lost there should be some well-meaning ones amongst us led among them, who have not taken pains to inform themselves of the abominations of that troop, I think it high time that a warning voice should be raised, and those wandering stars rebuked. I have been an unworthy member of the Old School Baptist Church for twenty-seven years, and for more than twenty years of that time my brethren have required my services in the promulgation and defense of the gospel. Often has my heart been made to overflow with gratitude to God for the rich repasts and consoling interviews I have enjoyed in the sweet

fellowship and communion of the saints; and often on the other hand have I witnessed that the Paschal Lamb had to be eaten in the night, roast in fire, and with bitter herbs. "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." But warfare is not so pleasant, but perhaps at times, quite as necessary; and the watchman that would skulk from the enemy when he sees him approaching, screen himself and fail to give alarm, would certainly prove himself to be recreant in point of duty, treacherous to him who had chosen him to be a soldier, and unworthy of the confidence of his companions in arms. I have been called upon to meet the enemies on many occasions, and perhaps few with capacities feeble as mine, have passed through more fiery ordeals. Often have I been made to tremble, and oft to feel the thrusts of the enemy. But having obtained help of God, I continue to this day, and feeling confident that the enemy is on the alert and preparing for a subtle fight, feeble as I am,

"I take my breastplate, sword and shield,
And boldly march into the field."

Truth, plainness and candor, shall be my motto, and I expect to draw down the vengeance of the enemy upon me by this kind of course, but perhaps it may as well fall upon me as upon another. One of those restless aspirants is in East Virginia. He and his compeers have already hurled many of their envenomed darts at me as an individual, both through the columns of his shameless periodical, publicly, and in private communications by letters to myself and others. I have their writings in my possession now, that would do dishonor to the vilest chronicler of political demagoguism. Others of the brethren, with myself, have been courted, kicked and goaded for the purpose of inducing us take part in their base bickerings through their columns, I suppose to give notoriety to their unenviable sheet; but I am glad to say that, so far as my knowledge extends, none of our names have been disgraced under our own productions in that paper; and I trust that we may all continue to disregard with perfect indifference all the rage of the howling beagles, however much they may still persist in snapping at our heels. I have not so much as read any of their scurrilous attacks upon myself, although I am informed that they have several. Another one, pandering to the Virginia editor, and one of the principal contributors to his columns, is holding out the flag to the Fullerite Baptists in Georgia.

I do not wish to make any unjustifiable allusions in reference to any of these characters, but will say this much, that when I have suspected a wolf in sheep's clothing, and was not at the time able to satisfy myself of the fact, I have been in the habit of taking their back-track; and when I have been able to follow the trail any considerable distance, I have generally had clear manifestations of the claws and fangs of the wolf, and the parting of the hoof, and the chewing of the cud of the sheep. And I hope, that if the Georgia lion is trailed back through Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, a fair and truthful report may be had concerning him.

And I trust, too, that if he should form a confederacy with the New School Baptists, again, he will find a more agreeable home, and a more lasting residence among them, than when he united with them in Missouri. An impartial investigation of the course and conduct of an upright man will be of service to him, while a similar course to a contrary character may be of service to others. There, is yet another in Ohio, who is displaying the flag both to the Fullerites and the Means Baptists of Indiana. But I need not say much to our brethren at a distance about these un-formidable little foxes. They are "small fry's" at best. We have so far survived their ravages without suffering any material injury, and apprehend no particular danger now, since they have been made manifest.

Indeed, they have been serviceable to us as a washpot, and we may have need of them again in that line; if we should, they will no doubt be ready to take away the refuse. The Ohio leader was once famous as a Methodist, but signalized himself by turning a half-somersault, and making a most desperate attack upon Arminians of every grade, with the prospect, apparently, of wearing the big bell for the Baptists. But finding they would not all dance to his jingle, he made the other half of the somersault, which set him as he was in the outset. He then proclaimed publicly that he quit fighting the Arminians and made war upon the Old School Baptists. Accordingly he did, but the little fellow has not hurt us yet, and we trust he may live long and agreeably with his present allies, and unless we should need another washing, we shall not need him.

Now, brethren, when I look over all this motley mixture, and consider what it will be when fully amalgamated and wrapped together in its contemplated conglomeration, with all its different casts and hues, I am made to ask myself the question: What will there be in the whole mass that a Baptist will have any use for? I, for one, feel fully assured that "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latch," from the heterogeneous compound. And I will here say to the New School Baptists; Take them if you have any need of them, but remember you must truckle to them, or there will be a fuss in the camp and the truce will be broken. But to those who love the truth, and whom I love for the truth's sake, let me say, dear brethren, " Say not a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy, neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. But sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."

Why need we court the popular crowd, when we hear the cheering voice of our heavenly Leader, "the Captain of our salvation," bidding us "fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

I never yet read of, or heard of, or knew the people of God to suffer any serious difficulties in consequence of a lack of numbers. Did Gideon suffer because he had too few to meet the Midianites? Did Elijah suffer any particular inconvenience because he had to meet four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal alone? When and where did the remnant, according to the election of grace, receive injury because they were too few?

Rather than court the carnal and confused multitude, let me, with Israel, "dwell in safety alone." "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations of the earth."

It was when we were too many that we saw trouble; when the strange children, consisting of Fullerites, Meansites, and anti-unionists, had to be fought out of our ranks. Let me dwell with the afflicted and poor people who trust in the name of the Lord. Brethren, may God enable you to discern between him that serveth him, and him that serveth him not.

Your brother, truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Reply To Letters From Elders W.L. Benedict And G. Beebe.

Muncie, Ind., March 3, 1858.

BROTHER BEEBE: - Permit me hereby to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 4th, and also one from brother W. L. Benedict, dated Jan. 14, 1858. They were received just upon the eve of my departure for Ohio, and an absence of between three and four weeks is respectfully tendered as an apology for the delay in my response. The tokens of brotherly love and friendship, together with the information of your very pleasant meetings, and concerning the brethren generally, merit and receive my hearty acknowledgments. From those letters I learn that the church at Warwick, N.Y., which I tried to supply for a time, is still without a pastor, and in them inquiry is made respecting Elder W. Tyler, of Indiana, who, at my request, consented to visit Warwick, in January. It appeared also from said letters that he had not arrived there. I hope that he may have visited them ere now. I wrote him in compliance with the request of brother Benedict, but have not heard from him since. From some reports that I have lately heard, I am induced to hope that brother T. will locate there.

On my leaving Warwick, some of my brethren were apprehensive that my departure in so short a time would make an unfavorable impression abroad, and thereby render the obtaining of a suitable minister a more difficult matter. To obviate such an impression should it occur, I agreed to publish my reasons for leaving, through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. But in the first place I will observe, that it is due to my brethren and friends at Warwick to say, that their liberality and friendship to me while there, far exceeded my anticipations or deserts. Never did I feel a warmer attachment to a set of friends in so short a time, and I have not words at my command to express my feelings on leaving them; nor am I fully assured that I was justifiable in rending myself from them. One thing I know, and that is, that my absence from them has produced no abatement of my

affections toward them. Oft my mind is rambling back amongst them, and were it not for the great distance that intervenes between us, I should often enjoy the happy privilege, as well as the highly appreciated pleasure, of mingling in their society; and here I will observe, that I hesitate not to say that any sound and consistent Old School Baptist preacher, who may desire a location where he would be exonerated in a degree from traveling, would find at Warwick a healthy location, sound and generous brethren in the church, social and liberal friends in the congregation and neighborhood. But all this is not giving the reasons for my departure. It will appear, however, from the foregoing remarks, that if there is a fault in the case it is not chargeable to the brethren and friends at Warwick. Whether or not the same can be said of their unworthy servant, is another matter; nevertheless, I proceed in reference to those reasons.

And first, the circumstances that caused the greater dissatisfaction on my part, was the fact of my laboring so little in the cause of my Master, compared with my former services in the West. It has been our custom since my acquaintance with the ministry here, to make frequent visits among the churches, and to have daily appointments for weeks and even for months. During those perambulations I was not infrequently in the habit of speaking twice a day, as I passed from house to house, and from one church to another; and during these excursions I often witnessed a degree of enjoyment that I could not realize in my isolated situation from my brethren in the ministry, and those among whom we so extensively labored. True, we had many hardships to encounter in thus rambling through a country that was then new, and in many instances difficult to explore, but the joy that characterized our successive meetings offered an antidote for them all; and I have learned, brethren, that associations formed under circumstances where so many trials and joys were commingled, were not to be so abruptly broken up without producing their effect upon my mind. After the loss of my companion, in the spring of 1853, I was in the habit of making many of those tours through our western counties, and although I often doubt the utility of my poor labors, yet it appears to me that if they were worth anything to anybody, my usefulness was much curtailed by being confined to one church, and generally to one or two discourses a week. It therefore frequently occurred to me that I was too idle in the cause of Him who had done (as I hoped) so much for me. This caused me much restlessness during the intervals of our weekly meetings in New York, my native imbecility to the contrary notwithstanding. It often occurs to me that I am worse than a worthless blank in the cause of my Master, but still in that case it would appear that if it was my duty to labor at all, it was an indispensable one to spend and be spent in his service. The old text that used to lurk within and hang upon my mind in my earlier days, ["You that make mention of the Lord keep not silence." Isa. lxii. 6,] would make me occasional visits, but not of the most pleasant kind. Besides all this, the fact of my being of so little service and so considerable an expense to my friends there, was a matter of no small annoyance to me. But again, it seemed necessary that I should have a part of my family with me there, and the separation from my children, and my absence from

those I had left at home in the West, were not matters of agreeable consideration. In conclusion, it will appear from the preceding remarks, that I have named three particular reasons for leaving Warwick:

First: An apprehension that I was too idle in the cause of Him whom I profess to serve.

Secondly: That we were more expensive than profitable to our friends there.

Thirdly: The separation of my children, and my consequent absence from a part of them.

After exonerating the brethren and friends at Warwick from any just cause of censure in the case, and freely acknowledging that their deportment towards their feeble and unworthy servant was far better than he deserved, it remains with them and others to say, or judge, whether the reasons in this article amount to a sufficient apology for him. For my own part I am often made to doubt the correctness of my best calculations, as well as my performances based upon them. My first reason may be based upon a chimerical and unjustifiable disposition to ramble; my second may also be fantastical and groundless, while the third may originate in a higher regard for the ties of consanguinity than that holier and indissoluble one which will unite the family of the Most High, when all our earthly bonds will be dissolved. Could I lay aside my roving, restless disposition, and enjoy the happiness of a domestic fireside, as I have done in days that are past; were I assured that my services would be acceptable and profitable there, and were my family so situated that I could feel assured that prudence would dictate such a movement, I should expect to find at Warwick as pleasant a home, and as agreeable society as at any other place in the range of my acquaintance. That the Lord may send them a pastor of his own choosing, one that will feed them with knowledge, is the sincere desire of their brother and servant,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Luke 17:12-19. The Ten Lepers.

Muncie, Ind., March 17, 1858.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I find in the fifth number of the current volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, a communication from sister Dutton, of Texas, in which she requests my views on the ten lepers who were cleansed, and of the one that returned to give glory to God. I consider myself a poor expositor, but perhaps that consideration should not exonerate me from giving such views as I may have. I do so the more readily through the SIGNS, because there are so many able communicators to overhaul them, and who I trust

will be faithful enough to correct any mistakes that I may make, or detect and amend any error that I may advance, so that others may not be troubled with them.

The circumstances alluded to are found in the 17th chapter of the gospel recorded by Luke, 12-19 verses.

I consider, in the first place, that the case exhibits a notable miracle performed by our Lord, one that is calculated to display a most convincing proof of his eternal power and Godhead, and thereby to confirm and establish the truth and authenticity of his everlasting gospel. Perhaps there is no malady to which humanity is incident, that is more direful and appalling in its nature, or one that has more effectually baffled the skill of earthly physicians, than leprosy. In the progress of the disease the surface of the body becomes affected with grievous ulcers, the skin thickened and scaly, the features and voice changed, the ulcers not infrequently extending to the toes and fingers, which separate joint after joint, the breath becomes highly offensive, fetid virulent sores cover the body, which at length becomes a mass of corruption, wastes away, the hair falls off the head, and at last the wretched sufferer sinks under the weight of misery. The medical faculty have ransacked the *Materia Medica* to find an antidote, but all their researches have ended in disappointment, and yet a touch or a word from the divine Immanuel could check its malignity and perfect a cure.

"And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off; and they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." This circumstance transpired no doubt according to the pre-arrangement of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. This divine arrangement led him through the midst of Samaria. Samaria was the land of the Ephraimites. Ephraim was a conspicuous character in the scriptures, and a subject of much prophecy. At one time we hear it said, He is joined to idols; at another, He is a cake not turned. Yet the Lord says, "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I WILL SURELY HAVE MERCY UPON HIM." Here, in his unerring providence, is a fit opportunity for the exhibition of his mercy. Another, equally as well arranged and conducted, was when he left Judea and must needs go through Samaria, which lay between Judea and Galilee, to meet the woman at Jacob's well, who proved to be another of those vessels of mercy, together with others, who dwelt in the city of Sychar, in the country of Samaria. Perhaps these circumstances contributed no little in opening the way for the labors of Philip, and the reception of his brethren who were scattered in the great persecution which was against the church at Jerusalem, and Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them, and they received the word of the Lord. - Luke viii. 1, 5, 14.

The all-wise Savior always paves the way for his servants, the preachers of his gospel, before he sends them to their respective field of labor, as was exhibited when Abraham

was about to procure a wife for Isaac, he told his servant that the Lord would send his angel before him.

All newly organized missionary machinations, aided by their ill-gotten earthly treasures, measures, means and instrumentalities, if combined to one effort, can never eject one Ephraimite from the temple of his idols, nor will it ever be done until the Lord bends Judah for him and fills his bow with Ephraim.- Zeh. ix. 13. While Ephraim was joined to idols, the Lord said, "Let him alone." He would have no means used. But the means-mechanics are not willing to do so. They would sooner take the lead themselves and have the Lord follow them to bless the means. They prefer to compass sea and land to make their own proselytes, for they will better subserve their interests. But when the Lord takes the "cake not turned" in hand, he cries, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God." When the Lord turns him he says, "Surely after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." The time had come, for an Ephraimite was to be turned, and they stood afar off, and lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Perhaps they were not permitted to approach the company, for the Jewish law forbade the lepers to mingle with the multitude, to guard against the spread of the disease by infection or contagion. And when he saw them he said unto them, Go, shew yourselves to the priests.

But why shew themselves to the priests? Not that they might be the means of cleansing them, for, As they went they were cleansed. Doubtless, then, it was for the purpose of stopping their mouths. Christ and his apostles did not fail on all proper occasions, both by morals and examples; but when his servants pursue that course they are denounced as fighters by Arminians, and sometimes by their tender-toed or weak-eyed brethren, who will often cry PEACE, where war is absolutely necessary.

And *one of them*, when he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving thanks, and he was a Samaritan. Where the other nine were, is not said. This one, however, was a Samaritan, or in other words, a true Ephraimite. Now perhaps one of the most prominent ideas and necessary lessons conveyed and taught in the whole connection, is the fact that whatever judgments or mercies may be visited upon the depraved sons of Adam, nothing short of the inward work of the life-giving Spirit of God, and the gift in faith of the Son of God, will ever cause them to give glory to God.

"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger." And he said unto him, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole."

Men often cry to God for mercy when afflicted with pain or misery, or when terrified with the fear of torment, and not infrequently make great pretensions to reverence, and often "get religion," ["our religion"] in that way; but when their sufferings are removed or

their fears subsided, where are they? Like the nine, none returned to give glory to God, who removes, their diseases; but it happens to them, according to the true proverb, The dog is returned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. The Lord asks, Where are the nine? Not intending that we should attempt to trace their steps and ascertain their particular abodes, but evidently to impress upon our minds that they did not return to glorify him, although he had cleansed them in removing one of the most foul, appalling, and (save by him) incurable diseases.

Many of us no doubt recollect in our former lives passing through scenes of sickness and pain, when our bodily sufferings and mental agony would extort cries for mercy in the time of our affliction, and when, too, we have been liberal with our promises to reform; but how soon are our promises as well as our Deliverer forgotten when our maladies are removed.

My sister, can we not say with the poet, even now, when we trust that the Lord has blessed us with sensibilities to appreciate his mercy:

"Thy judgments too, unmoved I hear,
(Amazing thought) which devils fear;
Goodness and wrath in vain combine,
To stir this stupid heart of mine?"

Then it takes something more than mortal diseases or their miraculous cures to bring us to the feet of Jesus, and cause us to give him glory. His Spirit, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, must rouse us from the slumbers of death, and thereby make us feel the malady of sin, worse than leprosy, and also give us faith to behold the Lamb of God who hung upon the blood-stained cross, groaning under the ponderous weight of our sins, and writhing beneath the withering curse of the righteous law that we had transgressed, until his quivering lips were sealed in death for our sins, and thereby an eternal redemption obtained for us. Was ever love like this?

"O, love divine, all love excelling,
Joy from heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thine humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown!"

Imbecile and powerless as we are by nature to give thanks and glory to God, prone as we are to forget his mercies and wander heedlessly from him, HIS divine power will raise a revenue of eternal glory to his worthy name, by giving unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of HIM that hath called us to glory and virtue. Those gifts brought the returning leper to his Deliverer's feet and caused him to thank and

glorify him, while the nine (as I conclude) only had a temporal care performed, and therefore were not careful to return for that purpose.

Brother Beebe, if you think the foregoing remarks are calculated to be of any service to sister Dutton, or others, you can publish them, otherwise dispose of them in any way you may think best. They are the best I have, and should they prove beneficial in any degree to any of our Father's family, I shall be fully remunerated for the time that I have spent in thus hastily penning them. In conclusion, accept of the special regard and best desires for yourself and for all the household of faith.

Most truly, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Visit To The Eastern Associations.

Near Lexington, Ky., Jan. 4, 1859.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - While visiting the associations last spring, summer and fall, many brethren and friends requested me after my return home to write for insertion in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES the details of my journey. When I finished my tour the circumstances surrounding me seemed to present no favorable opportunity of writing, and it was therefore postponed. As I kept no diary, it is too late now to refer to minute matters connected with my travels.

I think I left home on the 4th day of May, and from that time until the latter part of September I was at home only about nine days, and traveled nearly or quite five thousand miles. I first paid my friends and relatives in Western Virginia a visit, and had several pleasant meetings with them. From there I went to the city of Washington, and had the pleasure of an acquaintance with our highly esteemed brother, William J. Purington, and was very agreeably entertained by him and his very interesting family, and also by brother and sister Towles, remained several days, and had very agreeable meetings with the brethren of the church there. Leaving the city in company with a number of the brethren and sisters, we proceeded to the city of Baltimore, and found a hospitable home with our friend Dr. Thorne. From Baltimore we proceeded to the Baltimore Association, held with the church at Black Rock, Maryland. Here I had the pleasure of my first acquaintance with brother R. C. Leachman, of Virginia, and found him truly to be a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. The meeting was well attended, both with speakers and hearers, and was really a refreshing season. From there we returned to the city, and brother Slater and myself remained several days, and had very agreeable meetings and visits with the church and friends there. But I must not attempt to give a particular account of all the meetings I attended during my journey. I will just remark that I visited in course the Baltimore, Delaware, Delaware River and

Warwick Associations, the Northern Pennsylvania Old School meeting, the Chemung Association, and the Old School meeting of Western New York, in the states of Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York. The White Water, Lebanon, Conn's Creek and Licking, in Indiana and Kentucky.

Those meetings were all largely attended with many attentive hearers, and many able ministers of the New Testament preached to them the gospel of the grace of God. I formed many new and interesting acquaintances with ministers, brethren and friends, and saw very many of my former acquaintances, all of whose kindness and liberality impress my mind with a sense of gratitude and thankfulness to our heavenly Father and dear friends long to be remembered by me. But the most pleasant part of my tale is yet to be told. In attending those meetings and many intermediate ones, where I had the unspeakable pleasure of hearing the ministering brethren from the east, west, north and south, and with but one small exception, I do not recollect that there was one single conflicting sentiment delivered worthy of notice.

I have been an unworthy member of the Old School Baptist Church for about twenty-eight years, and do not believe there has been a time within that period when the church presented a more unbroken front, a more stable and impregnable phalanx, a more strictly harmonious unity of sentiment, than was exhibited at those meetings. The howlings and misrepresentations of some few that lately went out from us, because they were not of us, to the contrary notwithstanding. This latter, however, should not cost the saints a moment's trouble, for it was said by the voice of inspiration, that of our own selves (number or company) men should arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. What is more perverse than for one to misrepresent the views of another for the purpose of deceiving the hearts of the simple, alienating the friends of the traduced, and thereby drawing away disciples after the traducer, to strengthen or add numbers to his party, as has been the custom of some who have gone from us within a few years past? But such deceivers shall be made manifest in due time, and the Lord will cause their wrath to praise him, and result in the good of his chosen, "for the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

While crossing the Hudson River, on our way from the city of New York to the Warwick Association, I had an introduction to those able ministers of the New Testament, Elders Wm. Quint, of Maine, and Leonard Cox, of Massachusetts. Their preaching at that meeting proved a source of comfort that will not soon be forgotten by me. They touched upon a point (particularly the former) that had been vehemently urged against us in the west - the means doctrine - and met it so effectually with the same texts and arguments that we were so often driven into in that heated controversy, that it caused me to rejoice to find we had such sturdy friends and able advocates in the far northeast, who were strangers to us in the flesh. Those brethren did not learn those sentiments from us in the west, nor we from them. It therefore proved to me that there was a secret power

operating upon the entire household of faith, unseen by mortal eyes, unheard by uncircumcised ears, and unfelt by hearts untouched by the vitalizing Spirit of God; and that therefore all the Lord's children are taught of him, and have the mind of Christ.

At the Old School meeting of Northern Pennsylvania, I met other brethren in the ministry with whom I had not been acquainted before, namely, brethren Bolch and Donaldson. I had not the pleasure of hearing brother Bolch preach, he being at home, but his house afforded us an agreeable lodging during the greater part of the time we remained in the vicinity - brother Conklin, of New Jersey, being with me, and I consider brother Bolch a thoroughgoing Old School Baptist. Brother Donaldson's preaching was warm, interesting, and interspersed with a commendable use of the sword of the Spirit. In this neighborhood some of our calumniators had been industriously engaged in misrepresenting (publicly) our views. A large and respectable congregation was in attendance, and it was expressed from an intelligent source that it had been reported through that neighborhood that the Old School Baptists were denying the Godhead of Christ, but that they found it not to be the case. Thus we witnessed the truth of the ancient prophecy, - "Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places." Brother Conklin appeared to be fully equipped for the emergency.

I shall not here attempt to give a list of the names of all the ministering brethren that I met with at the different meetings I attended, for they are mostly known to the Old School Baptists generally, through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES and otherwise; but I think I can safely say that I conversed with and heard at least fifty of those faithful witnesses who testify the gospel of the grace of God. In recounting the immutable truth, the precious promises, the wholesome lessons of instruction and messages of consolation that I heard proclaimed at those meetings by those faithful servants of the Most High, I have been impressed with the beauty of the expression of the prophet - although I feel unfit, unqualified and unworthy in every way to be numbered with them. "How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord, shall bring again Zion." - Isa. lii. 7-9 and Rom. x. 15. Go outside of the Old School Baptist Church, and I defy the world of professed churches, with all their theological training, catechizing and drilling, to produce as many servants to preach as many sermons, and exhibit as little discrepancy, as was portrayed on those occasions.

These were men possessing passions and faculties like other men; some learned, and some illiterate; some wise, and some, considered by carnal professors very unwise; some rich, and some very poor; some weak, and some strong; some in one part of our wide-spread country, and some in another. But however they may differ in their natural relations as to their passions, faculties, qualifications, worldly wisdom, circumstances as to this world's goods, strength of mind or location, they speak the same thing, they lift up

the voice together, they see eye to eye; and not only in some hackneyed sentences and men-taught phraseology, but in doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, they prove that they have had a thorough furnishing from the oracles of God, and that they are led by the unerring Spirit of the Lord into the deep things of God, and (to the natural man) impenetrable mysteries of godliness. The BIBLE, the whole bible, is their text-book, and with that before their eyes, and the living Spirit of Light in their hearts to illumine their minds and unfold to them the mysteries of revelation, they may bid defiance to the criticisms and rage of men, and stand unabashed before the very gates of hell. But, my dear brethren in the ministry, remember that yours is a high and holy calling - a weighty responsibility rests upon us. Whatever opposition we may meet with from the world, the flesh or the devil, we are to keep back nothing that is profitable to the saints; we have continual need of the whole armor of God; we are not to give place to error, no, not for an hour; but to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. We are to wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. But on the other hand, we are to avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain among brethren. It is a nice point, and requires unceasing watchfulness to maintain a proper medium in these matters. We are to exercise all long-suffering toward our offending brethren, but to meet with promptness and faithfulness the deceiver who would disseminate false doctrine, or sow the seed of discord among brethren.

My dear brethren and sisters all, you are not to expect too much from your preachers, however you may esteem them for the work's sake. Remember, they are but men, and imperfect ones, too. They carry about them a body of sin and death. Give heed to what they say, and practice what they inculcate while they can give you a "Thus saith the Lord," but, no further. Every step we take beyond the limits of God's revelation, will likely prove disastrous to ourselves, and result in difficulties to our brethren. Then, dear brethren, read your Bibles for yourselves; it is noble indeed to search the scriptures daily, to see whether the things you hear be so. But after all, your preachers may preach with the tongues of angels, and you may read until your eyes are dim, but all this will not suffice in the absence of love.

"Knowledge, alas! 'tis all in vain,
And all in vain our fear;
Our stubborn sins will fight and reign,
If love be absent there."

Then, "Let love be without dissimulation." Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another. Love is the forerunner of peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is

the effectual cord that successfully draws our wandering feet into the paths of obedience, and leads us into the elysian fields of peace. It effectually drives from the bosoms of the subjects of grace those hateful demons, envies, jealousies, hatred, wrath, strife, seditions, &c., and fills the mind with opposite and heavenly principles. It gives the most infallible and abiding testimonials of our relation to God our heavenly Father, our trust in the shed blood of the Redeemer, and of our right to the tree of life, as well as our title to the inheritance of the saints in light. For, "Whosoever loveth is born of God."

" 'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet,
In swift obedience move;
The devils know and tremble, too,
But Satan cannot love."

Whatever external forms, ordinances or ceremonies the church may exhibit, without this internal garnishing it will be awfully deficient. The midst of the chariot that King Solomon made for the daughters of Jerusalem was said to be paved with love. But says one, The love of many waxes cold, and therefore our harps are hung upon the willows. True to the letter; but, brethren, although the winter winds may howl upon us, let us not despair; though our devotional ardor be chilled and blighted, let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. 'Tis winter now, literally, and we therefore are the more particular to keep within doors. It certainly is poor policy for the Lord's family to absent themselves from their Father's house because it is cold. Nay, let us crowd around his altar; he dwelleth in Zion, and he only can warm us. David could once say, O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermanites from the hill Mizar. Those were cold regions. It is not best that we should have all summer and no winter, all light and no darkness. When it is his pleasure, and best for us,

"He calls the warmer breeze to blow,
And bids the spring return;
He sends his word and melts the snow,
The fields no longer mourn."

"He maketh darkness and it is night, and all the beasts of the forest creep forth." Said he, "I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil, I the Lord do all these things." Certainly it is all right if he does it. "All for the lifting up of Jesus on high," all for the good of his chosen. Whenever it is necessary for the displaying of his own glory, and for the good of his children, he can soon open the way and attune our hearts to sing, "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land."

Then can we take sweet counsel together, and walk to the house of God in company. But it is only the effulgent rays that emanate from the Sun of Righteousness that can brighten our pathway. The cords of his love alone are sufficient to draw us effectually and sweetly onward in the paths of peace, joy and righteousness. The divine and spiritual blessings treasured up in our glorious Mediator alone can cause our hearts to burn within us, and enable us to feast abundantly upon the rich provisions of his house. Under the hallowing effects of these spiritual gifts we exclaim, "Draw us, we will run after thee. He hath brought me into his chamber; we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." The house of God is a lovely place for us now. We can sing with the poet:

"I love her gates, I love the road,
The church adorned with grace,
Stands like a palace built for God,
To show his milder face."

My brethren and sisters, until it shall please our glorious SUN to bless us with the reflection of these divine rays, may we trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon our God.

Your brother and servant,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Zechariah 10:4.

Lexington, Ky., Jan., 1859.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - While on my visit to the associations and Old School meetings in the east last spring and summer, several brethren desired me to write on certain passages of scripture. I penciled them down, but have not now access to my notes. One request, however, I recollect, which was made by brother Schoonover and others while in the vicinity of the Chemung Association, which was that I should give my views on the 4th verse of the 10th chapter of Zechariah. It reads as follows:

"Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle-bow, out of him every oppressor together."

I am but a poor commentator, but will do the best I can. In the first verse of the chapter the Lord's people are told to ask of him rain, and that he will make bright clouds and give showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. This is figurative language.

None can command the clouds and rain, but God. So it is with the spiritual gifts that he can bestow upon his people. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth." - Isaiah lv. 10, 11.

Verse 2. For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain, therefore they went their way like a flock, they were troubled because there was no shepherd. Nothing is more likely to give the flock trouble, nor to turn them to their own way, and away from the Lord, than those false dreamers. Therefore the Lord says in the 3rd verse, "Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats; for the Lord of hosts hath visited his flock, the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle." Next comes the text: "Out of him came forth the corner."

It will be observed here that the personal pronoun *him* has for its antecedent, *Judah*; consequently this *Corner* came forth out of Judah. In Hebrews vii. 13,14, it is said, "For he of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar." "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah," &c. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation," &c. In the 22nd verse of Psalm cxviii, it is said, "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner." See also Matt. xxi. 42; Mark xii. 10; Luke xx. 17; Acts iv. 11; 1 Peter ii. 7. Here then is the Corner that came forth out of Judah. In Eph. ii. 19,20, the apostle says, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." This *Corner*, then, constituted the foundation of the apostles and prophets, as well as the saints at Ephesus, and all the faithful in Christ Jesus, so that whatever may be the dimensions, extent or capacity of the building, there needs no other than this chief corner-stone to support it; and as the building is fitly framed together in the Lord, (the foundation,) the same corner-stone may be considered continuous up the entire building, until it becomes "the head-stone of the corner," thus serving as a wall round about it, and also the glory in the midst; for it is built for an habitation of God; for "the Lord dwelleth in Zion." "God is in the midst of her; he will help her, and that right early." Built upon, surrounded by, and overtopped with this one character, this "man shall be an hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Then hell may rage from beneath, "The eternal God is her refuge, and underneath her are the everlasting arms."

She is therefore sufficiently guarded from that quarter; earth with her sweeping tempests may assail her from its cardinal points; Sinai from above with her threatening

wrath, her bellowing thunders, her angry storms, and arrows dipped in vengeance, may all hurl the fury of their ire toward her,

"The Lord is still her dwelling place,
She's there secure from all their rage;
This mighty rampart reared by grace,
Her safety seals from age to age."

"Out of him the nail." This is but another figurative expression by which our Lord and Savior is portrayed. The nail, as well as the corner, came out of Judah. In the 22nd chapter of Isaiah it is said, commencing with the 22nd verse, "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open. 23 - And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place, and he shall be for a glorious throne to his Father's house. 24 - And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, the offerings and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. 25 - In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in a sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off, for the Lord hath spoken it."

What a glowing description of our Redeemer! What language could more strikingly exhibit his sufferings and death for our sins, and their removal, and the glory that should redound to his name as the legitimate consequences that should follow? "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory." In order to his bearing the glory of that temple a burden was to be laid upon him (the nail). That nail was fastened in a sure place, to be removed, cut down, and fall, and the burden that was upon it cut off. Isaiah says, "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." "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, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." And again, "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." He was led to Calvary by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, as a lamb to the slaughter; there the whole burden of our sins were hung upon him; there he was cut down; there did he fall, and there was the burden cut off, never to hang upon him more, never to be charged upon his people; for the Lord said, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." How wonderfully is the counsel of God in his own language displayed here! *I will fasten him* as a nail in a sure place. How forcibly is brought to view the immutable purpose of God in laying the sins of his people upon Jesus, whom he sent into the world at his appointed time, and who was led to the definite place where two ways met; where the law by virtue of his identity and unity with his

people should rigidly demand a full remuneration for our sins; where the sword of justice should smite the Shepherd, whose life was cut off from the earth as the final requisition of that law; and where Satan and his ministers from beneath should crown him with thorns, nail him to the cross, ply the Roman scourge, and finally plunge the fatal dagger to his heart with wicked hands, but according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. There was no evading that place. Heaven's decree had unchangeably fixed the whole matter, for that decree thus ran: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." It was then for his people he was cut off; "for the transgression of my people was he stricken," saith the Lord.

Although he delighted to do the will of his Father, yet this was a case of necessity. The justice of the righteous law of heaven required it at his hand, and as soon would the throne, the imperial throne of the eternal Judge, have crumbled to ruin under him, as would one jot or one tittle of that law pass, till all was fulfilled. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Truly, then, he was fastened as a nail in a sure place.

"But see the wonders of his power,
He triumph'd in his dying hour,
And though by Satan's rage he fell,
He dash'd the rising hopes of hell!"

"Out of him the battle-bow." The battle-bow is an implement of war, and its efficacy in battle depends upon the strength of the bow, and the power and skill of him who uses it. It is important too that the arrows used be of the right kind of material and properly prepared. Then if the bow be sufficiently strong, he who uses it powerful and skillful, and the arrows when ejected of good quality and properly made, we may reasonably expect efficacy in the warfare. Let us see whether we have not such a warrior, such a bow, and such arrows.

In the chapter preceding the one in which our text stands, commencing with the 10th verse, the Lord says, I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. As for thee, also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee; When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man."

In the first place it is said that the chariot and the horse is to be cut off from Ephraim and Jerusalem. Psalm xx. 7 says, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;" but

Ephraim and Jerusalem are not to use them, the battle-bow will afford a better weapon for them. But the battle-bow was to be cut off, yet this was not to impair his power nor impede his reign, for he shall speak peace to the heathen by the overthrow of their enemy, and his dominion shall be universal, when by the blood of his covenant the prisoners were to be sent out of the pit, and turn to the stronghold; and the Lord says he will render double unto them, when He has bent Judah for him, and filled the bow with Ephraim.

From the foregoing connection it appears clearly that Judah [the Lion of the tribe Judah] constitutes the battle-bow in our text, the God of battles with his omnipotency, bends and fills that bow with Ephraim. From the same connection, it appears that Ephraim constitutes the sons of Zion who is made as the sword of a mighty man, and are to be raised up against the sons of Greece.

The Greeks were very ostentatious of their wisdom and erudition. The apostle had to encounter them, and we find that with all their boasted wisdom and literature they could not know God, and the preaching of Christ crucified was foolishness to them. We have amongst us, even in our day, those who rely upon their Grecian or literary attainments; they are not permitted to preach unless they are Greek scholastics. But how lamentably ignorant they appear to be of God and of his righteousness, while they go about to establish a righteousness of their own. Their bow is bent by their own strength, their arrows are of their own manufacture, and made generally in times of great excitement, and many of them very ill-favored, indeed very crooked. What has Judah and Jerusalem to fear from such enemies as these? Though a host should encamp against them they need not fear. They may appropriately say with the Israelites of yore, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid, nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." - 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He is our munition of rocks, our refuge from the storm, our dwelling place, and

"There, though besieged on every side,
Yet much beloved and guarded well;
From age to age she has defied,
The utmost rage of earth and hell."

While we thus have the scriptural testimony that we are sustained from beneath, and are guarded from above, as well as encircled by this chief corner-stone, the burden of our sins, cut off when Jesus fell, and that he arose and reigns, and as the man of God's right hand, whom he made strong for himself, flings terror and consternation abroad amongst our enemies, as the battle-bow with quiver filled with arrows of his own preparation, let us never cease to remember with heart-felt gratitude the wondrous victory achieved by him for us, and at the same time look humbly to him for a suitable preparation of the

heart, and answer of the tongue, that we may speak of the glory of his kingdom, and talk of his power.

I suppose that the latter clause of the text, "Out of him every oppressor together," has reference to the oppressive kings of Judah, and shall offer no further comment thereon, as I have perhaps been too tedious already.

If the foregoing remarks should afford either comfort or instruction to the brethren who made the request, or any others of the household of faith, I shall feel fully remunerated for the time spent in writing. And in conclusion, I desire that grace, mercy and peace may abound with the Zion of God.

Your brother, I trust, in ties inseverable,

J. F. JOHNSON.

I Corinthians 1:21.

Lexington, Ky., Nov. 12, 1859.

BROTHER BEEBE: - In the 18th number, present volume of the SIGNS, I find a request from brother R. M. Thomas, of Missouri, for my views in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on I Cor. i. 21, which text reads as follows:

"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."

To arrive at the object of the apostle in giving this instruction to his brethren, we must give some attention to the connection in which it stands.

The subjects to whom the communication is made, and their preparation for the appreciation of it, together with the situation in which the apostle then found his brethren to be, will require a passing notice.

And 1st, The subjects were those who constituted the church of God which was at Corinth, to them that are sanctified (or set apart) in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ; and 2nd, grace was given them by Jesus Christ to enrich them in utterance and knowledge, and thereby the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them, so that they came behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who should confirm them unto the end, that they might be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ; 3rd, He then refers them to the faithfulness of God, by whom they were called to the fellowship of his Son, and beseeches them to speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together, in the same judgment; 4th, For he had already learned that there were divisions among them, which had caused contention.

This contention seems to have originated in the preference that they had expressed for their respective preachers, a fruitful source from which contentions have arisen in all ages, and from which the preaching of Christ is well calculated to save believers. I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Here was the ground work of the contention.

It appears likely to me that the *means* doctrine had obtained to some extent among the brethren, *and that* we know by experience always causes contention, as the advocates of it are more disposed to look to the means or instruments, (as the preachers are called, and as some claim to be,) than to Christ.

It is a bad state of things when our preachers get between us and Christ, and are so large in our estimation as to conceal him from us. Hence the necessity of constantly and faithfully holding up Christ to view, and hence the great object and prime mission of the apostle to preach Christ, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect. We therefore are not to garnish with fine words, not to smooth over and palliate the preaching of the gospel so as to adapt it to the carnal mind, and thereby divert it from its legitimate use, the salvation of believers from error; "for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which 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."

Then, 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? Only the subjects of God's grace in whom he has destroyed the wisdom and prudence of this world, and convinced them that neither their wisdom or prudence can avail them anything relating to their great salvation, can see where they are, nor can all the lore of human wisdom teach them their whereabouts, or save them from their errors.

Men untaught by the Spirit of God suppose that by their wisdom and prudence they can know God, and teach others to know the Lord also; but while thus deluded God hides the things of his kingdom from them, and reveals them unto babes. But when it pleases him to destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent, and thereby make foolish the wisdom of this world to his people, he prepares them to appreciate that preaching which is to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks (those who seek after the wisdom of this world) foolishness. Let us remember, however, that it is not until *after that* that the preaching of Christ can have any salutary effect upon them; and so the text reads, "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."

There is not only a salvation or deliverance of believers brought to view in the text, but a final and irrevocable veto is stamped upon the proceedings of all those will-worshippers who are arrogating to themselves capacities to know God and teach a knowledge of him to others. If the graceless professors of religion could believe that text,

and then would act with a commendable degree of candor and honesty, what a smash-up there would be in the Missionary Boards, Bible Societies, Theological Seminaries, Sunday School Unions, and the various other worldly and unscriptural combinations connected with them! They would not be endeavoring to "teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord," if they believed "the world by wisdom knew not God," and would act consistently.

A knowledge of God is only attainable by those who have received the gift of eternal life, and then only by a direct revelation from the Lord. "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." Power was given to Jesus over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him, and this eternal life was given that they might know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

Peter was convinced that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God; and said Christ, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

How benighted, how miserably blinded by the god of this world must those be, who are engaged, as they say, in "christianizing the world." To christianize is to make christians, and the gift of eternal life is indispensable in that case.

In that work "the flesh profiteth nothing," said Jesus: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." A christian then, possessing eternal life, is the highest order of being that inhabits this earth. How presumptuous then in poor, frail man, to arrogate to himself that noblest work of God! It would be as easy for them to change the spots of the leopard and make a sheep of it, or the Ethiopian's skin and make a white man of him, as to make christians of themselves, or of those whom they profess to be christianizing. But our God will not share his glory with such impudent aspirants; will not give it to another, nor his praise to graven images. He alone can raise as up from the depths of sin and the domain of death, and the glory of his majesty is portrayed in the sublimity of the work. It crowns him with a regal diadem, such as earthly princes never wore, a crown of glory, rich, lucid and eternal, its brilliancy forever eclipsing all the glory of mortals who are professing to do his work and would rob him of his diadem, when if all their worldly wisdom was concentrated in one focus and all exhausted upon one subject, they could not make the meanest reptile that crawls upon the earth, and yet they boast of making christians, the highest order of God's beings that dwell upon the earth. O the folly of man!

Then "crown him Lord of all," and let us unite with the poet and sing:

"He raised me from the depths of sin,
The gates of gaping hell,
And fixed my standing more secure,
Than it was before I fell."

But after God makes foolish the wisdom of this world in the estimation of his people, and enables them to "believe according to the working of his mighty power," it pleases him to save them in a certain sense by the foolishness of preaching, or that preaching which is to them that perish foolishness. "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Thus we are taught that it is to them that perish, and to them that seek after the wisdom of this world, and not after Christ, who is the wisdom of God and the power of God, that the preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness to, and no wonder. What use have they for Christ crucified? What do they want him for? Not to get up their worldly institutions; they neither have his commandment or example for all that. Not to prepare them for their ministry, they can do that themselves. Not to furnish their outfit, the Missionary Board can do that sufficiently to enable them to compass land and sea to make proselytes. Not to teach them doctrine to promulgate, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

Now if they can do all this, I repeat, no marvel that the preaching of the cross is to them foolishness. "But, unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God," and that preaching is calculated to save the believer from trusting in the wisdom of this world, or the power that it confers upon mortality.

The salvation here alluded to, is not that salvation which Christ completed when he laid down his life for the sheep. That salvation was exclusively "of the Lord." Said he, "I looked and there was none to help, I wondered that there was none to uphold, therefore mine own arm brought salvation."

But in addition to the salvation from sin and from its condemning power, we often need salvation from such divisions as were amongst the brethren at Corinth at that time, and other errors that the wisdom of this world invent, and upon which a worldly religion is based. Many such errors throng the pathway of the christian while here. A sound ministry, therefore, is a most important gift that the Lord has conferred upon his people to save them from division and false doctrine.

I have long observed that preachers who confine themselves to the doctrine of the Bible are not the most successful in multiplying members in the churches they preach for, but those churches who are blessed with such a ministry are less subject to contentions and divisions, as a general thing. On the other hand, when the preachers are in the habit of exhibiting a system partly of grace and intermingled with conditions to be performed by men to aid in the saving of sinners, so as to ensnare some of the children of God, who are taught by the Lord in their experience that salvation is by grace, and also to induce others to unite with the church who depend upon their own wisdom and prudence to qualify them for church membership, we see at once the foundation laid for divisions; and many of us have witnessed, within the last thirty years, the blighting consequences of

this "linsey-woolsey" garb, or sowing of "divers seeds" system in the many divisions that have rent the church within that period. The history of the church in all ages proves that it has not been the case that the greatest ingatherings have been attended with the greatest blessings to the church, but as a general consequence, contentions and divisions have been the result.

But again, when she has presented to view an afflicted and poor people, trusting in the name of the Lord, when there was nothing in her external appearance to court the fancy of worldly religionists, when she had to suffer reproach and persecution for the name of Jesus, when she has been content with receiving such only as "the Lord added to the church," when her watchmen have lifted up their voice together, determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified, they have been saved from these unhappy contentions, divisions and false doctrines, and peace has flowed among them like a river. This should encourage us not to be cast down and troubled, from the fact that we present a strait gate, a narrow way, and that there are but few that find it.

Then, as we profess to have nothing to do with making christians, let us be satisfied with such as the Lord will have to be saved. And as every true minister of the gospel knows that "salvation (from sin) is of the Lord" altogether, and that he is fully able to accomplish all that pertains to that glorious work, and will no doubt certainly and eventually raise every one of his believing children up at the last day; and further, as it has pleased him to give them eternal life, and thereby to qualify them to know the truth that makes them free, or liberates them from error and delusion, to bless them with capacities to receive and appreciate the doctrine of God our Savior, with all its wholesome lessons of instruction; and as it has further pleased him to prepare his servants for the work of the ministry, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood, to teach them to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded, and to "save them that believe," from the errors and inroads that their enemies are ever endeavoring to propagate and make among them, let us make full proof of our ministry in faithfully watching over the flock for their good.

Brethren, do we really love the children of God? Surely, if we love him that begat, we love those also that are begotten of him. Let us then, manifest our loyalty to our King, and our love to our brethren, his children, by faithfully laboring for their present salvation. It is reasonable to suppose that men will bestow the greatest amount of labor upon what they esteem most highly. We may mark this as a general rule, and I think it is a good one, by which to discriminate between faithful and false ministers.

When a servant is circumcised in heart to love the Lord, (and of course his people,) he will be found toiling among them, laboring for their good and to save them from delusion. But where the love of the world predominates amongst the preachers, they will be heard whining for money to save the world, and endeavoring by every available stratagem to secure the friendship of the world, which is "enmity to God." We are then reminded of the expression of the apostle, "The friend of the world is the enemy of God,"

and measuring them by the scriptures, we set them down as such; and when we weigh them in those balances and find them wanting, we should judge and deal accordingly. The faithful shepherd, then, will be found doing the commandments of his Master, which are, "Feed my lambs," "Feed the church," "Feed the flock of God," "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." In short, his labors will be confined within the church, among the children of God, who are most dear to him, and be calculated "to save them that believe." The false shepherd, or hireling, will be found laboring "without (the church where there) are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie," and we must therefore judge them by the company they keep.

I submit the foregoing remarks, first to the consideration of brother Beebe, and if he thinks best to publish them, then to my much esteemed young brother Thomas, and to all my dear brethren and sisters who may think them worth their perusal; and still remain, as I trust, their humble servant, bound to them in the love and fellowship of the gospel, though unworthy in myself, as the most unworthy amongst them.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Reflections On The Present Condition Of Zion.

Lexington, Ky., Jan. 20, 1860.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - In forwarding my remittance for the Signs, Banner and Messenger, I will communicate the following reflections to your consideration, and that of the household of faith, if you see proper to publish them.

I have many reflections on the present condition of Zion, the city of our God, so far as my acquaintance extends, and gladly would I contribute to her comfort and instruction. I know that my desire is to see her enjoying the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. But how is she to arrive at that desirable condition, is a grave question that all her children should seriously consider. When we look back over a few of the fleeting years that have gone by, and reflect upon the vehemence of the merciless elements that have raged upon her, the war that has been waged against her by those professing to be her friends, the question often recurs to our minds, From whence come wars and fightings among you? O that all her dear children could earnestly adopt the language, and feel more of the spirit that prompted David to say, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee; because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."- Psa. cxxii. 6-9. Could these sentiments predominate in the

sons and daughters of Jerusalem, how admirable would her courts appear. In retrospect the past I am forcibly reminded of Isaiah ix. 14-16: "Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel, head and tail, branch and rush in one day. The ancient and honorable, he is the head, and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err," &c. A fearful retribution awaits the leaders who cause the children of Zion to err. Decapitation is a serious operation - cutting off the tail not so much so. Transient sojourners who teach lies are generally soon detected, and the cutting of them off produces but little effect, compared with cutting off the ancient and honorable. Yet, painful as it is, sometimes the ancient and honorable have to be cut off, and it seems often to be a necessary consequence that those who trail after them (the tail) must be cut off too. Nevertheless, Zion is still safe, and these painful visitations, like all other things, work together for (her) good, and are calculated to guard her against making flesh her arm, however ancient - or honorable, and prove to her that "the name of the Lord (only) is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and are safe." Yes, "In his name shall they rejoice, and in his righteousness shall they be exalted." The din of war may rattle in her midst, tribulation, like a sullen deluge, may be sweeping away her comforts, the fiery elements consuming her enjoyments, then may the encouraging voice of the Bridegroom be heard in the midst, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 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 shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." With these divine assurances before us, and our hearts attuned by the life-inspiring Spirit of the living God of Israel, we can joyfully join in one harmonious orchestra with the poet, and sing:

"Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where he goes;
Hinder me not, shall be my cry,
Though earth and hell oppose."

But, brethren, let us be careful to follow "where he goes," and when the enemy is hurling his carnal darts at us, not to act under the influence of the spirit that he did who drew the sword and cut off the ear. Remember that when our Leader was reviled, he reviled not again, and that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; and though we have to contend against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, let us be careful that we use "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." And remember that we wrestle not against flesh and blood. When flesh and blood are the belligerent parties, the contest is more equal; but take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and you are invulnerable, for "the

Lord is our strength, and his name is our high tower;" "For the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and are safe." In that name alone there is safety. But the greatest difficulty with us is, that we have two ruling principles about us, and it is sometimes hard to distinguish which of them is governing us. We have a law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members.

Now we should not only set a strict guard over the actions and words of our members, but over the law also that governs them, for law is a governing principle. It would be preposterous to conclude that our members could sin without some impetus to actuate them. The overt act of sin never could be committed unless there was an internal principle to prompt it. But what is that impelling principle? I conclude that it is "the carnal mind," which is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.

Then, as before remarked, let us keep a strict guard over that carnal mind or law in our members that prompts us to speak or act wrong; for though an overt act should not be committed actually, our Lawgiver has taught us that the principle that prompts us to do wrong is equally sinful. - See Matt. v. 28. I make this illustration to warn my dear brethren against indwelling and inadmissible evil thoughts, evil surmising and jealousies; for they are like vipers' eggs, that hatch out venomous serpents, or like deadly night-shade seeds that sprout up, vegetate and produce their legitimate poisonous fruits.

Dear brethren, my object in this communication, feeble and incompetent as I know I am, is to incite you to love and forbearance in your associations with and deportment toward each other. I think that in some parts of the country, particularly in some of the western states, there is an unusual and unjustifiable degree of criticism and fault-finding, and I know not but I might say fault-seeking, prevalent among the brethren; and perhaps some of the preachers take the lion's share in the tragedy, but many others of the brethren seem to catch the same spirit, and worst of all, it too often appears to be a spirit of - shall I say malignity? That's a hard spirit for a christian to possess. Well, what shall I call it? Perhaps I had best not name it, but try to explain its operations as well as I can.

One is speaking on some mysterious point of doctrine, (for it is all mysterious) and he drops a word that does not jingle exactly right in his brother's ear, and now there is ten chances for him to be made an offender for that word, where there is one for him to escape. Perhaps it is the doctrine of election, a cardinal point with Old School Baptists, set at naught by all other societies in the present day, so far as I am advised. It, however, has had its advocates and enemies in all ages of the world. Ever dear to its advocates is that soul-cheering doctrine. It remains a paramount principle in the doctrine of the Bible, underlying the whole system of salvation. Of course the friends of that doctrine have no difficulty in proving that the saints were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that the Lord has been their dwelling-place in all ages, that he bear them and carried them all the days of old. All this is plain enough, if he would stick to the Bible, and keep unprofitable criticism away. But now comes the *hows*, the *whys*, the *whats*, and

the *wherefores* of the critic, and the *when* of the infidel, for he is apt to be about at these critical seasons. And I will just here observe that we need not want a better introduction to Mr. Infidelity than to hear him say, "O they were not really chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; it was nothing more than a purpose to choose them." Now establish that as a fact, and there is no proof of the doctrine of election at all in the Bible; it sweeps it away, root, stem, top and all; for there is no proof there, that there was any such a choice made in Christ after the foundation of the world.

That species of infidelity, however, is pretty well purged from the Old School Baptists in this part of the country. I would that I could say as much of unprofitable criticism. But there appears to be a degree of restlessness in the minds of some, an eagerness to comprehend all the particulars of the divine mystery, and the preachers are called upon to explain, and at it they go. Now comes up the whys, whats, &c., for them to explain. Well, of course, those who believe and love the doctrine will tell all they know about it, and perhaps some of them more too. Well, but "why were they chosen in Christ?" says one. I believe the answer to that question, so far as I know, has been about as follows: "He chose them in Christ because they were in him, and didn't come down to this world, or go to some other place and choose them to put them in Christ." Now, I don't know that there could be a better answer than that found outside of the Bible. Another wants to know, "what was chosen in Christ?" or "who were chosen in Christ?" One says, All his spiritual children, or all his spiritual family. Another says, No; there never was any spiritual children until they were quickened by the Spirit in regeneration. And another says, The idea of a spiritual family in Christ before the foundation of the world, won't do at all, "How can that be?" Then follows a train of cross-questions and random answers, and now, before it is done with, it is a fortunate circumstance if some are not mad, and some others not in a good humor. What is to be done, in this case? Shall we drop the idea of a choice in Christ before the world was? No, that will not do; for the scriptures say, "chosen in him before the foundation of the world." What then? Are we to conclude that this "old" Adamic man, with his flesh, blood, and all his natural faculties were chosen in him before the foundation of this world? That would be a new theory amongst us, and contrary to the teaching of the Bible, which says he is "earthy," and therefore not heavenly. But, says the rejoinder, the idea of a spiritual family in Christ is what I want to understand. Well, is not Christ "spiritual?" (See 1 Cor. xv. 46.) And has he not a family? (See Eph.iii.15.) Is not that family "a spiritual house?" (1 Pet. ii. 5.) And is not that house "the church of the living God?" (1 Tim. iii.15.) Is not that church "in Jesus Christ?" See the commencement of most of the epistles. Is there more in him now than always were? If so, tell us when and how they got in him, or whether there are additional members added to his body, or whether he is not the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

Then comes up the doctrine of the new birth, or the christian warfare, each of which is subjected to the same routine of strict animadversion. We have to meet the question: Who are born again? We answer, perhaps, The children of God. How do you know that? Ans.

They are "born of the Spirit," or "of God," and that proves them to be his children. Well, but what is it that is born? Ans. It "is spirit." Yes, but you must delineate and name the child. Well, it is - "a man." But whence are they? "Not of this world." But that does not tell whence they are. Well, John said he "saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN."

Now, if these Bible answers would satisfy the curious mind, we might get along; but now comes up a "knotty" question: What part of the man is born again? Now, if all were as ignorant as myself, I suppose it would be best to confess ignorance and let that matter rest, for the scripture does not tell me one word about *a part* of a man being born again. But one says it's the soul, and because his brother will not take proof from the *back* of the Bible he is a "heretic." Another says it is the mind, and because his brethren are not willing to receive proof from the same source they are numbered with heretics also. But the greater portion of those *part* regenerationists with whom I have conversed, conclude that, although some part of the old man must be born again, they cannot tell what part it is, but the preacher must tell all about it; and although they do not know themselves, if he does not explain to their satisfaction, and make them know what neither him nor they have ever seen in the scriptures, down he must go.

But what an immensity of trouble we have had to wade through here in the west, because some of the preachers and brethren have got smart enough to find out things that the scriptures never taught. The faithful servants of the churches suffer no little from this state of things. All this guess-work is thrown into their path, and they must throw it out, or get over it the best way they can. Then every word they speak is watched and weighed, (and sometimes in doubtful balances,) and for each one that is susceptible of a criticism, he is apt to be made an offender. It is right to watch the servants, but it is to be feared there are too many in some of the western states that watch their brethren for evil, rather than for good. But there is more to complain of than a mere criticism of words. They are contorted, misconstrued, and made to exhibit what the speaker never intended.

Yes, some of our enemies, professing to be Baptists, do worse yet. I have been credibly informed that a leading professed Baptist preacher of Ohio, said that J. F. Johnson preached that Christ's people existed in eternity as men, women and children, going about as they do here, than which, a greater absurdity, nor a more downright falsehood never dropped from the lips of man. But this was from an enemy, and could be borne without a murmur. I do not mind their fiery darts at all. To see my brethren disposed to find fault and fall out on trivial occasions, or obscure questions about words, is what wounds me, and I am made to exclaim with one of old, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt."

I sit down here in Kentucky, or lie down on my bed at night, and think of the large circle of acquaintances among the saints, in and out of the United States. I hope I love them, and pray for their welfare, feel anxious to hear from them, and frequently do hear from many of them through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, *Southern Baptist Messenger*, by

private letters, and otherwise. I highly appreciate these vehicles by which our correspondence is conveyed from one part of the country to another. I hear from one quarter, and the mercy drops are falling there, the Sun of Righteousness warming, his love-inspiring beams causing the hearts of his children to thrill with joy, and peace among them flowing like a river.

Then I rejoice, and think how I would like to be there and participate in the feast. I hear from another, and they are cold, but in peace. I am glad to hear that. Not glad that they are cold, but that peace is there; and I comfort myself as well as I can as to the coldness, with the reflection that I have seen almost sixty winters, and all of them, but one, have been followed with spring and summer, and that one will be soon, in all probability. But occasionally I hear from another, and wars and contentions are there. Then my spirits sink and seem to wither, and I feel sad.

Again the question recurs to me, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? I think of the family relation, the kindred ties and should-be endearments. One Father, one mother, one elder Brother, one brotherhood, one joint, incorruptible inheritance, and one destiny throughout. I ask myself the question: Can it be possible that those eternal ties can be finally and forever sundered? "Never! NEVER!! **NEVER!!!** They may be covered over for a time with rubbish and thereby concealed from view, but never finally severed. But then I think you need not count it strange at last, that brethren fall out with each other, seeing they so frequently fall out with themselves. At any rate I am confident that I fall out with myself much more frequently than I do with my brethren. But why is all this? I think it is because we are component beings, possessing two adverse principles or natures.

And now, perhaps, right on this supposition the critic will come at me. Well, let him come; I shall not quail before him yet. No, nor will I fear the fair investigator if he comes. For should I be wrong and he convince me of my error, he will befriend me, and thereby place me under lasting obligations to him. At any rate I shall take the position that the christian, as we recognize him here, is a component of good and evil, and that there are two different sources from which those two principles or characters proceed. One is Adam, who is corrupt and defiled in every part throughout all his generation. The other is Christ, who is incorruptible and undefiled throughout all his generation.

There are two seminal heads, with their respective indwelling seed. One "is natural," the other "is spiritual." The seed of one is called "a seed of evil doers," "the seed of the wicked," &c.; that of the other, "a holy seed," "a godly seed," and it is said of Christ, "he shall see his seed." Two generations legitimately proceed from these two sources. One is called "the generations of Adam," the other "the generation of Jesus Christ." One is corrupt in all its parts, the other is born of incorruptible seed, and therefore cannot be corrupted. As one "is natural," his offspring is natural, and "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know

them." The other "is spiritual," and his offspring "are built up a spiritual house," they eat spiritual meat, and drink spiritual drink, One "is born of the flesh (and) is flesh:" and "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" the other is "born of God," or "born of the Spirit (and) is spirit;" and "whosoever is born of God doth not sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." In short, one of these heads "is earthy," the other "is heavenly;" and "as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Now the question is, Do christians possess both these natures, (principles,) or shall I say men? I think I may safely say that the Bible shows conclusively that they do, and that every christian's experience testifies to that fact.

Paul said to his brethren; "Though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." They were in possession of an "old man which is corrupt," and a new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness. He delighted in the law of God after the inward man, but found another law in his members warring against the law of his mind. The scripture says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." I have no doubt but Paul was, and yet he says, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Nor can I doubt the christianity of Peter, yet Christ says to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Old father Erskine, I think, was one too, and he says:

"To good and evil equal bent,
I'm both a devil and a saint."

I conclude that the Lord's children are all materials of the same building, and yet there was seen in the Shulamite (the church) "the company of two armies." But why need I multiply proofs and refer to instances to establish the fact that the christian is a two-fold character?

My dear brethren, do you not feel the warfare raging within, while the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh? Do you not feel the struggling of the "carnal mind" and the mind of Christ? Do you not daily mourn over the multitude of the evil thoughts of your carnal mind, (for we cannot think without a mind,) as well as over your vain words and acts of folly, the legitimate fruits of that carnal mind? Now, brethren, if you feel all this, remember that your servants are "carnal, sold under sin," as well as yourselves, and therefore require lenity, and the exercise of your forbearance, as well as yourselves.

Have you a servant that is old and infirm, one who has long and faithfully battled with your enemies in the cause of truth, who has been galled and chafed thereby until his patience is worn threadbare? Remember that he is still in the flesh, and needs your forbearance, and then exercise patience towards him. Have you one that is young and inexperienced, sensitive and zealous in the cause of truth, one whom you have set apart for the ministry, believing that he profitable unto you? Remember too, that he only can

"see in part," and when you see an error in him, like Aquilla and Priscilla, take him to yourselves and teach the way of God more perfectly. Have you one of full and mature age, strong and confident, and whose zeal sometimes seems to outstrip his knowledge? Teach him to put "no confidence in the flesh," but that "God (alone) is his strength."

But above all, let those brethren who are so tenacious as to conclude that all must be right with the servants, set them down and get them up in their places, and try whether they can guide themselves and their brethren straightforward over a smooth sea.

In conclusion, my dear brethren in the ministry, remember that you are to bear hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Be patient, meek, but faithful. And whether your perils be by land, by sea, or among false brethren, in your patience exercise your souls. And remember, too, that the best fruit trees are generally clubbed the most.

Commit yourselves to God and to the word of his grace, who is able to keep and preserve you blameless unto the day of Jesus Christ.

Your friend and brother in tribulation and patience,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Matthew 11:12.

Lexington, Ky., May 9, 1860.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - On looking over number five, present volume, of the SIGNS, I find a request from brother, William A. Smith, of Florida, for my views on Matt. xi. 12: "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*"

My knowledge of the scriptures is very limited, and my capacity to expound very deficient. But as brother Smith has asked only *my views* on the text, I will try to comply with his request.

If there is a generally received opinion among Old School Baptists on that particular verse, I have not heard it expressed, nor do I recollect having heard any opinion on it, except one implied by work-mongers, when exhorting dead sinners to "come up and take heaven by storm." They, however, are no criterion for us. For with one breath they will tell us that God is very anxious to save, and get all to heaven that he can, and with the next, that sinners must force themselves upon him by violence. I have no idea that the *violent* spoken of in the text has any reference to the children of God, when desiring or seeking Christ or his kingdom, or that the *violence* alludes to their entrance into that kingdom. The word *violent*, when used as a noun, (as in the text,) signifies a murderous

or unjust assailant, or one who acts with unseasonable vehemence. The derivative, *violence*, therefore, exhibits force applied, an attack, an assault, a murder; outrage, unjust force, eagerness, vehemence; injury, infringement, &c.

These are characteristics that the humble followers of Christ who seek his kingdom do not desire, and nothing more is necessary to show them the absurdity of the idea than to compare the significance of the terms with their own experience and the scriptures. I conclude that the violent spoken of in the text, were the vehement Jews, and the blood-thirsty Romans who so unjustly assailed the first Baptists that the world ever saw, who have been ever since that time the "speckled bird," for such characters to be incessantly plucking at. The language in the text has reference to a specified time: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." It is said in the following (13th) verse, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." It therefore appears that the prophets were suffered to predict, and the law to prophesy by its rituals until John, but the first Baptist preacher must be set up as a mark for the arrows of "unjust force" to be hurled at. He was therefore soon violently thrust into prison, to remain for a time, and afterwards decapitated there. The circumstance of John's imprisonment, his mission and character, seems to have been the subject of conversation when the language of the text was spoken, as the preceding connection will show, and I suppose constituted a part of the violence which the kingdom of heaven suffered. But John was not the only Baptist, or subject, of the kingdom against whom the rage and vehemence of those carnal religionists and bloody Romans exercised their malignity. The great portion of their violence was directed against the most prominent Baptist of all the rest, the head and leader of the whole family was the great object of their ire, the subject of their wrath and violence from the time he first made his appearance in the world until now. The enunciation of his birth gave Herod and all Jerusalem with him great trouble, and soon the violent edict went flying through the land, carrying death and dismay upon its wings to hundreds of devoted victims, so that "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not." The word violence occurs at least fifty-nine times in the scriptures, but never to signify a commendable act. It has always reference to the unlawful deeds of unjust assailants. It is said of the Savior that "He done no violence," and of his people, "He shall redeem their souls from violence," and David prayed to be preserved from the violent man. But violence was a characteristic mark, and trailed in the footsteps of Herod and the Jews, from whom the kingdom of heaven suffered violence in the days of John the Baptist. It is said by some that the kingdom of heaven did not exist as such until the day of Pentecost; but this idea will not do for Old School Baptists. They may differ about the time of its organization, or formally being set up, but there should be no discrepancy about its existence. However we may differ about the time of its organization and the deliverance of its laws and ordinances by which its publicity was portrayed, that event did not give it being or existence.

It was said by Daniel that the "kingdom should be given to the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is (present) an everlasting kingdom," &-c. But no sooner were its subjects developed in the pellucid light of the SUN of Righteousness, than they began to feel the force of the violent.

"And the violent take it by force." As this is an everlasting kingdom, the taking of it by force for a time could not destroy it. It is said of this kingdom, "It shall never be destroyed." And although it is said that the enemy shall "wear out the saints of the Most High," that they shall be given into his hand for a time, overcome, be made to flee into the wilderness, and be subjected to all manner of persecution, "it shall never be destroyed." When we consider the condition of the kingdom of heaven in its apparent infancy, its advocates so few, its enemies so numerous and violent, the former comparable to a "little flock" of sheep, scattered among numerous and ravenous wolves, often taken and lacerated in the most relentless manner, the powers of the most potent governments that the world knew incensed against them by the arch fiend of darkness, the enemy of all righteousness, we not only admire and extol the infinite wisdom that provided for, and the omnipotence that sustained them, but may "thank God and take courage," while we reflect that, although Zion has had to pass through many deep waters, and very many fiery trials, the waters have not overflowed, nor the floods drowned; the fire has not burned, nor the flames kindled upon her.

"Zion, preserved by Jehovah her Lord,
May smile at the fire, the flood and the sword;
She'll outlive the tempest's most violent blast,
And land in the haven of safety at last."

I have, as briefly as I could, given the best ideas I have on the text; and if brother Smith, or others, should receive either instruction or comfort from the foregoing remarks, I shall be remunerated.

In conclusion, that the wisdom of God may direct, his grace sustain, his love console, and peace pervade the entire household of faith, is my sincere prayer, for the Redeemer's sake.

Affectionately, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

P. S. - I received a kick from a horse soon after seeing the request of brother Smith, which may apologize for the delay in my answer. J. F. J.

Malachi 4:5,6.

Lexington, Ky., May 29, 1860.

BROTHER BEEBE: - In the 10th number, present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, I find a request made by our young brother, Peter M. Sawin, for the views of "our dear brother Johnson," on the last two verses in the Old Testament. Although the initials commonly prefixed to my name do not appear in the appeal, I presume, as you have, that it was made to me, as I have for a number of years been acquainted in the neighborhood, and with the family of which he is a member. At any rate, I will try for his encouragement to comply with his wish; and if I am not the man, brother Sawin can renew his request. The text reads as follows:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."- Mal. iv. 5, 6.

This prediction was made to "Israel," as appears in the first verse of the book of Malachi, and from the preceding prophecies, as well as the foregoing part of this one, it appears that a dreadful retribution awaited the Jewish nation. In that nation there was "a remnant according to the election of grace," and to that remnant the Lord promised in the commencement of the third chapter to send his messenger to prepare his way before him, or in New Testament language, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, and that on the appearance of that messenger, the Lord whom they sought "should suddenly come to his temple," &c. His people, therefore, were assured of a timely warning, as well as a divine interposition, before the terrible calamity should fall upon the nation.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet." That the individual here alluded to was John the Baptist, is evident, as the language of Christ to his disciples clearly shows in Matt. xi. 13, 14: For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. And also Matt. xvii. 10-13: "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

The question may arise, Why the name Elijah in Malachi, and Elias in Matthew? This is in consequence of the different terminations of the same name in the Hebrew and Greek languages, as is the case in Isaiah - Jeremiah = Hebrew; Esaias - Jeremias = Greek. The Hebrew terminus being harsh or hard, the Greek soft.

"Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." This great and dreadful day was doubtless when the awful judgments of God should be poured down upon the

nation, city and temple of the Jews for their disobedience and rebellion, which was to close up their nationality, put an end to their ceremonial services, and exhibit fully the abrogation of the former or legal covenant. It was truly a great and dreadful day; so that the Savior, in depicting the thrilling catastrophe to his disciples, says, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." But why such heavy denunciations, such terrible judgments to be visited upon them? Or why should they fare worse than other nations? Because the Lord had chosen them as his peculiar national people, had blessed them above other nations, chastised other nations to favor them, given them the law by the disposition of angels, but they did not keep it. All the day long he stretched out his hand to a disobedient people, rising up early and speaking to them himself and by his prophets; "but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." By the law he fully made known to them as a nation his will; they did it not, and therefore must be beaten with many stripes.

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." The mission of the first Baptists was to reconcile relatives, not to make them, nor to be the means or instruments in making them. So it was with the first Baptist, and thus it has been with Baptists ever since. Some who have stolen their name, and others who have assumed different names, profess to make fathers and children by proselyting. They manifest great zeal in the work, too. They would formerly compass sea and land to make one. They yet compass sea and land to make many. But in all their proselyting they have never made one father or child according to the Savior's testimony, except to make it more the child of hell than themselves, and the Lord knows they are bad enough. Not so with the Baptists; their business is to reconcile fathers and children, turn their hearts to each other. O that we could see them more zealous in this mission of peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." In preference to all other places, let us have peace in the family. Family dissensions are more distressing than all others. It is very bad indeed when parents and children fall out. I once had a father in Israel to fall out with me. I did not know then, nor do I know yet, that I gave him cause for so doing. But O, what anguish I felt. It made such an impression on my mind that sometimes I almost imagine I can feel it yet. But it taught me a lesson which I have not forgotten yet; and I think that it makes me feel more tender towards and careful of the feelings of the babes in Christ. While we look upon the elder brethren as fathers, and the younger ones as children, we should remember that there is a sense in which we should call no man on earth our father. As to a spiritual paternity, Christ says, "Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven." In that sense, those only are the spiritual children of God who are "born of God," born of the Spirit. But there is another sense in which the aged men are recognized as fathers, and the young ones as children. Fathers, therefore, should remember the mission of the first Baptist, and endeavor to exercise a parental and tender guardianship toward their young

brethren. And what a lovely example we have of this fatherly supervision over his children in the good, old, beloved disciple. - See 1 John ii.1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." The fathers, then, should exhort the children not to sin; and when the children are overtaken in faults, if they are really the children of God, they are often pierced with anguish, cast down, and filled with fearful forebodings in view of their ingratitude. Then, fathers, be not bitter against them, but encourage and console them (as a tender parent would an erring and repenting child) with the consoling language of the same old, lovely father, who says, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous."

How I have been pained to hear fathers speak in an unkind and angry tone to babes in Christ, and what anguish I have seen brought upon children by such an unfeeling course! The fathers in Israel should remember that children are sensitive, their feelings tender, and therefore forbear to exhibit a censorious disposition, or use harsh language to them, and thus "turn the heart of the children to their fathers," by proving to them that they desire their comfort and welfare, and not to alienate them. On the other hand, the children should pay all due deference to the fathers, honor the hoary head, and comply with every reasonable and lawful requisition, recollecting that fathers sometimes become peevish like children. I recollect very well, when I was very young in the faith, of falling in company with a number of fathers in Israel. They encouraged me with the precious promises of the gospel, exhibited the riches of grace in the salvation of such a poor, helpless sinner as I felt myself to be, the love of God for us, even when we were dead in sin, and then what obligations we were under to render to him our tribute of praise and thanksgiving for so rich a display of his mercy and goodness toward us; and then I have heard them warn us against indulging in sin and vanity, exhort us to our duty and the enjoyment of the high and heavenly privileges of the house of God, and O, how my young heart was turned to the fathers! They appeared to environ me as an impregnable wall to guard, and as the sons of consolation to solace me. Thus the hearts of the fathers and children are turned to each other, "being knit together in love." Then peace flowed among us like a river, our joys abound more and more, we can walk to the house of God in company, and sing from the bottom of our hearts:

"Peace be within this sacred place,
And joy a constant guest;
With holy gifts and heavenly grace,
Be her attendants blessed."

Dear brethren, are we Baptists indeed? Then let us portray the character and mission of the first Baptist, in turning the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers. My dear young brethren, Sawin, Beebe and others, you are very young, and how I rejoice to learn that you have felt the force of the chords of love, by

which your hearts have been turned to the fathers and children, and by which, also, you are now prepared to appreciate the endearing relationship. There is nothing that so beautifully embellishes youth as to see them take up the cross and follow Jesus. God grant that you may "Bear the cross, endure the pain, supported by his word."

If I could induce you more and more to reverence your Savior, follow the example of your pious fathers, turn your hearts to them, and away from the vanities that surround and court your young affections, to decoy and rend you from them, how richly would I be remunerated in complying with your request. I know that temptations, trials, conflicts, tribulations and persecutions await you, if you will live godly in this evil world; but be of cheer, fear not. Follow your GREAT LEADER, the Captain of your salvation; love your brethren, honor your fathers, and you have nothing to fear.

" Take your breastplate, sword and shield,
And boldly march into the field."

Your Captain has led the van, and will assuredly bring up the rearward. And you, fathers, provoke not the children to anger, but entreat them as children. But why need I entreat you thus? I know that if you are true fathers in Israel, you will be ever ready to reach to them the helping hand, extend the warning voice, and deliver the consoling message of the blessed gospel to the children. When the heart of the fathers is thus turned to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, how excellent do the courts of Zion appear. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." Then it is that she appears "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," and out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines.

"Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." The Lord in his infinite wisdom has made every necessary provision for the development and perpetuity of his church or kingdom in this world. He has created the heavens, made and peopled the earth, to declare his glory, display his justice, and unfold the riches of his grace. The world, therefore, must be preserved until his purposes are accomplished, the good pleasure of his will consummated in relation to its preservation. The salvation and preservation of his people here, and their final and manifest glorification eternally, seems to have been the prime and crowning work of Jehovah "for the lifting of Jesus on high," the great object in the creation of the world, and well calculated to settle and secure upon his august head a royal diadem, a regal crown of brilliant and eternal glory. Then to teach us how or why it is that this rebellious earth is preserved, he presents his people as the salt of the earth; and adds, "but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" Or in other words, How would the earth be preserved in that case? Would it not appear like the salt had lost its savor, if those fraternal and filial ties did not exist in the church? Hence the necessity of turning the hearts of fathers and children to each other; otherwise we might look out for the curse. But thanks to the Lord, the curse has not fallen yet, nor will it while he has

use for his kingdom here. The hearts of servants, fathers and children are all in his hand, and he has power and authority to control all, and has therefore said he shall turn the heart, &c. That it is for the elect's sake that the earth is preserved is evident. Christ, in speaking of the great tribulation that should attend the "great and dreadful day of the Lord," said, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." The direful calamity would rage until all flesh would be destroyed. "But (he adds) for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Our enemies (the worldly religionists) manifest great ingratitude and a lamentable degree of ignorance to their best interests, when they are casting reproach and contumely upon us, and when they desire and pray for our extinction. Poor creatures! Like those who crucified the Savior, they know not what they do.

When the church of Christ is removed from the earth there will be no more salt to preserve it, and of course the Lord will smite it with a curse. But, dear brethren, while Zion's banners are nailed to the mast-head and floating in the breeze, her chart in her hand and her Father at the helm, fear ye not, nor be dismayed. She'll make the port and anchor in the haven of eternal repose.

My dear young brother, I have complied with your request in the best way I could, and may God bless you and all others that think the foregoing remarks worth their attention with wisdom to detect errors and appreciate the truth that may be therein contained.

Your brother, most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Amos 7:2,3.

Cherry Grove, Near Lexington, Ky., Nov. 23, 1860.

BROTHER BEEBE: - Sometime ago I received a letter from brother A. F. Dudley, of Missouri, requesting my views on the latter clause of the second, together with the third verse, of the seventh chapter of the book of Amos, either by private letter or through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, preferring the latter. At the time, I thought the subject too mysterious for my weak capacity, and that it would be difficult for one to explain that to others which he did not understand himself. On reviewing the subject, however, I have concluded to send you the following comments, and, if you see fit to publish, present it to brother Dudley and other readers of the SIGNS. The second and third verses read as follows: "And it came to pass that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O, Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee; by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The Lord repented, for this: It shall not be, saith the Lord."

I shall aim to treat the subject in a general way, and not according to the precise order in which it is recorded. This language was used under the former, old covenant, and had reference to things then existing, as well as to the future. When the Lord gave the law to national Israel, he no doubt knew what effect it would have on that people, what their rebellious course would be, and what the ultimatum of it. See, Dent. xxxi. 16, 17, 29. By the law he secured to them the plenitude of the land of Canaan upon the condition, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." If not, he was armed with the sword of the surrounding nations, the famine, the pestilence, the ferocious beasts of the forest, the poisonous sting of the serpent, destructive insects, such as the locust, caterpillar, palmer-worm and grasshopper, to chastise them for their rebellion, humble their pride, and thereby perpetuate their nationality until his wise designs were accomplished in relation to them.

Often had he to visit those calamities upon them to bring them to repentance, and when that was accomplished sufficiently, he repented of the evil with which he chastised them, or in other words, changed his course of procedure towards them, restoring them to their former privileges and blessings. They were often brought low, or made small by those visitations. It was under one of those afflictive dispensations that the prophet cried, "O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee; by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small." It is then added, "The Lord repented for this: It shall not be, saith the Lord." The scriptures frequently speak of the Lord as repenting, and yet it is said, "The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that should repent." - 1 Sam. xv. 29. And again, "God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent." - Num. xxiii. 19. We are not, therefore, to conclude that the Lord repents as we do. Repentance with man is of various kinds, and produced under different circumstances. They often repent of their wicked deeds because they are detected, and justice is about to overtake them. This is the case with thieves, robbers, murderers, &c. Others, again, repent of their wickedness from a sense of fear or dread of punishment in a future state. Such is the Arminians' repentance. A very zealous one told me that if the devil was dead nobody would pray any more. But again, some repent of their deeds when such deeds result in their disappointment, and militate against their temporal interests. All this is regret, or a remorse for past misdeeds, or dread of merited retribution. Surely we cannot conclude that God repents in this way, for there are no past misdeeds with him, nor fear of future consequences. Moreover, his people repent when he grants them repentance unto life; not only for their past follies, but from a feeling sense of their evil natures and perplexities. "The goodness of God," (not the fear of punishment) leads them to this. Neither can God repent in this way; for there are no follies, no evil nature or perplexities with him. All this produces a change of feeling, and in the latter case a turning away from sinful practices, and a loathing of sinful nature. This is not the case with God, for there is no change in him, "neither shadow of turning." Said he, "I am the Lord, I change not." Yet it is, said, "The Lord repented for this, (the reduction of Israel by the grasshoppers) and said, "It

shall not be," and of course the grasshoppers were stopped and the grass made to grow again. We are then to conclude that it is to represent to us his diversified dealings with Israel in humbling them at one time, and raising them up at another, which to them was a change in his procedure. But some may ask, Why all this diversified course with his national people, as he knew what the end would be? We answer, to try them. But why try them, as he knew what the result would be? Answer, that we might know. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning." Hence we learn that if matters were suspended upon the condition, "if ye be willing and obedient," relative to a temporal inheritance, and proved a total failure, we need not suppose that an eternal inheritance suspended on similar conditions would be attended with better success. We look back then, at the former covenant, and see a final failure on the part of national Israel to secure a temporal inheritance upon the conditional plan; we turn a leaf and look into the new dispensation, and there we see, consequently, that the Lord makes a new covenant with the house of Israel, "not according" to the former, not "if ye be willing and obedient." We learn therefore, that it is, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." This being the case, we are to look for an answer to the question, "By whom shall Jacob arise?" in this sense elsewhere.

In the subsequent part of this prophecy we learn what was to be the final result of the conditional dispensation. From time to time God had passed by their transgressions, and repented, that is, changed his course of dealing or withheld his judgments when they had been sufficiently humbled and repented of their misdeeds, until we may be thoroughly convinced that the repentance they were capable of performing evidenced that all their goodness was as the morning cloud and as the early dew that passeth away. He lets us know that he will not pass by them any more. "The songs of the temple shall be humbled in that day, saith the Lord God; there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence." He would cause their sun to go down at noon, and darken the earth in a clear day, their feasts were to be turned into mourning and all their songs into lamentations. "Behold the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth, saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord." "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, who say that the evil shall not overtake nor prevent us." Next, as I conceive, comes the answer to the question, "By whom shall Jacob arise?" "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and build it as in the days of old. That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord which doeth this." In the resuscitation of Jacob, there is a most sublime and heavenly contemplation for the sons of Jacob. He by whom Jacob is to arise, is "the resurrection and the life" in a two-fold sense. God in his ruling power and reigning grace, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ

Jesus. He not only raised us up from under the curse of the law, the power of death and beyond the prevalence of the gates of hell, but manifestly brings us up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and sets our feet upon a rock, establishes our goings, and puts a new song in our mouth, even praises to our God, thus preparing us as fit materials for his temple, and then rears the heavenly superstruction, makes it his everlasting dwelling place, then out of Zion the perfection of beauty shines with all the radiance of celestial glory. Thanks to his superlative name; in the august majesty of his power he raises up the eternal edifice in the face, and over the opposition of all who would dare retard its completion.

"What though the gates of hell withstood,
Yet must this building rise;
'Tis thy own work, Almighty God,
And marvelous in our eyes."

"We have a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Her walls are salvation, her gates praise. Happy, brother Dudley, happy all ye children of Zion who sit in the gates of the God-protected fortress, safely environed with those impregnable walls, immovable bulwarks, and chant the hallowed lays, the harmonious anthems of praise to the great Master Builder. To us the fortifications may seem at times dilapidated, the enemy coming in like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. The songs may be silent in the gates, the harps noiseless upon the willows, but the cheering voice of the great Architect may be heard saying, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it." "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting, crying, Grace unto it."

"Deep on the palms of both my hands,
I have engraved her name;
My hand shall raise her ruined walls,
And build her broken frame."

But we say he is the resurrection in a two-fold sense. He has not only,

"Raised us from the depth of sin,
The gates of gaping hell;
And fix'd our standing more secure,
Than 'twas before we fell,"

but he will yet exhibit a more glorious display of his resuscitating power in our ransom from the grave, our redemption from death, when all the lowering clouds that scowl over

our religious horizon here shall be forever dissipated, when the transcendently luminous SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS shall arise with healing in his wings, when the effulgent light of the resurrection morn shall burst upon our enraptured vision with all its heavenly lustre, when the lucid orb of eternal day shall loom up with all its radiant effulgence to glitter forever in the firmament of heaven; then we can realize more fully, "By whom shall Jacob arise." Till then, may we be enabled to count all things but loss that we may win Christ, and be found in him, not having on our own righteousness which is by the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith. That we may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Your brother and servant in the Redeemer's kingdom,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Vindication Of The Author, And The Doctrine By Him Proclaimed &c.

Cherry Grove, Near Lexington, Ky., January, 1861.

My Dear Brother Beebe: - I should ere now have sent on my remittance for the papers, but the throng of business in these critical times, together with my professional engagements, have kept me so busily employed that until now I have neglected it.

In this communication I propose trying to vindicate myself and the doctrine I have endeavored to proclaim against certain misrepresentations published abroad in a professed Baptist periodical, erroneously styled "Zion's Advocate," in number three of the volume published in 1860. It is unpleasant to me to be under the necessity of even naming that bitter sheet, for it is well known by many that I have often been calumniated and misrepresented through its columns, to many of which misrepresentations I have not condescended to pay even a passing notice; nor would I now stoop to notice the publication alluded to, did it not stand over the name of an esteemed brother, namely; brother Wilson Thompson. But in justice to brother Thompson, I must say that his name appears in that paper without his consent; he informs me so in a letter to me, and says: "Clark's paper I have never patronized in any way, but have uniformly considered it as a mischievous issue, gotten up for ambitious purposes, &c." The letter published purports to be one written by brother Thompson (a private one) to his son G. M. Thompson, of Georgia. On seeing the published letter, I immediately wrote to Eld. W. Thompson, inquiring whether it was a correct copy of his letter to his son. In his reply to me he says: "Some parts are the very reverse of what I have written to my son, and other parts, are correct in substance, but not verbatim." I again wrote to him, asking him what parts of

said letter he did endorse, and what parts "were the very reverse of what he had written," but have as yet received no reply.

I wish it expressly understood, therefore, that the remarks I design making in the following manifesto are not designed for brother W. Thompson, but in reply to the garbled letter that has been placed over his name to give it credibility, and published broadcast over the land in two of our enemies' papers. Nor would I even do this, were it not for the many interrogatories that have come to me from my brethren and friends, by letter and otherwise, too many for me to answer by private letters, and too distant for me to answer verbally. A part of the letter published reads as follows:

"On Sunday, [at White Water Association, August, 1859,] J. F. Johnson preached his doctrine of non-regeneration, and said that the words, 'A man must be born again,' did not mean a second birth, or that the child born had ever been born before. Then he said that the spiritual seed, or child, was preserved in Christ, its spiritual head, as a woman preserves her fruit in a jar, so that no taint or sour could ever tinge it in the least degree. This holy, immortal, incorruptible spiritual child was the elect, and this was chosen in Christ, and was in union with him in eternal oneness, and this seed was never in Adam, never fell, was never tainted with sin in the least degree. The Adamic man, he said, was quite another family, of another kindred, and was not in any relation to Christ, the spiritual head of the church, nor was any change effected on any part of the Adamic man by regeneration or the birth of the Spirit, &c."

Now, some of these expressions have a semblance of what I advanced on that occasion, others are "the very reverse" of what I said, and radically different from what I have ever believed, and also from what I have been known to preach and was known to preach on that very day. I have seen, conversed with, and otherwise heard from many members of White Water, Lebanon and Conn's Creek Associations, who, were present on that occasion, and who have testified that I did not thus preach. Some of the arguments I used on that occasion are yet retained in my memory, though much was forgotten which my brethren who were there have since reminded me of. I have certainly never aimed to preach a doctrine of non-regeneration; I certainly do not believe such a doctrine. How could any sane man, professing to believe the scriptures, preach that doctrine? How could I, who have professed to believe and gladly receive the scriptures on that subject for more than thirty, and have earnestly endeavored, though in weakness, fear and much trembling, to preach the gospel of my Master for twenty odd years; I, who humbly, though often feebly, hope that I have experienced a "second birth;" I, who have so often proclaimed publicly the words of my Savior, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." I repeat, how could I get up there in the presence of my brethren who had so often heard me insist upon the necessity of that birth, and preach a doctrine of non-regeneration? But I recollect, as before observed, some of the arguments used by me on

that particular subject. I argued that the words, "Except a man be born again," did not mean that the "second birth" was identical with the first; that the word again "did not necessarily involve that idea, as Nicodemus understood it, and quoted Heb. xiii. 20, and perhaps Rom. iv. 25, and I Cor. xv. 4, to prove that it did not; and then further observed that our brethren sometimes when speaking on that subject said that the old man was not changed in regeneration, but that we were to be understood in that as contending that the old was not changed into the new man, the flesh into the Spirit, and opposed the idea involved in the expression, "born over again," as some have it. Permit me here, brother Beebe, to leave this publication for a moment, and give my own views, in my own language, on this birth, and then if they are wrong, the writer alone is responsible; I cannot be responsible for the misrepresentations of others. I am aware that both my writing and speaking are exhibited in a bungling manner, but hope that either can be as well understood by my own words as by those that others would put into my mouth. The writer of this article has no desire to give his views as a guide for others, nor should any receive them unless they are clearly sustained by the scriptures. My argument is, that the birth of a thing never changed the nature of the thing born, although it does change its circumstances and condition, thereby exposing it to sensations not realized before the birth. A goat before its birth, is a goat afterward; the birth never turns it to a sheep; and so it is with everything in all the round and realm of nature. The Savior, therefore, has certainly used the most appropriate figure to illustrate his work, his strange work in bringing his people to a knowledge of himself. Now, instead of wrangling and running over and over a set of metaphysical whims about a man being born "over again," or some part of the man born over again, we would do well to be governed a little by reason, at least, and more particularly by the scriptures, (for they are always reasonable,) and let them be our guide. Do the scriptures give us one solitary intimation of a man, or any part of a man, being born over again, and his nature thereby changed, so as to make a spiritual man out of a fleshly one, or a new man out of an old one, or out of some part of the fleshly or old man? Instead, then, of making these two words, "born again," the whole "bane of contention," let us go to Christ's own explanation of the subject, and try there to get the mists and fog driven from our eyes, so that we may see the matter as it is. The explanatory part of the subject is this: "That which is born of the flesh is FLESH, and that which is born of the Spirit is SPIRIT." Now for the application of the argument. Does the birth change the flesh to spirit or the spirit to flesh? Is not each after the birth precisely what it was before it? Is the nature of either changed? Is the word change used at all in the scriptures in relation to the new birth? But again; Is that spirit which is "born of the Spirit - born of God," (for God is a Spirit,) changed in its nature, in any respect? Was it not before the birth, holy, sinless, incorruptible, and born of an "incorruptible seed," and does it not remain so? "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." But still again; Was not the flesh before the birth unholy, sinful, corrupt, and therefore corruptible? Saith Paul, "I

know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." And again, "Put off the old man which is corrupt," &c. Now, he does not say this of the mere muscles that clothe his skeleton, but of all "that which is born of the flesh," including his "fleshly mind," "fleshly lusts," for these are born of the flesh, and the Savior therefore pronounces them "flesh." Then the whole matter, as the Savior expressed it, is included in a mere "nut shell," though it speaks volumes. It is simply this: *flesh and spirit brought together, each retaining its former nature, unchanged*, hence the warfare, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other;" and let anyone confront this position if he can, for the Bible is against him. These constitute "the *old man* which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and the "*new man*, which is after God, created in righteousness and true holiness," "the *outward man* which perisheth, and the *inward man* which is renewed day by day." "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." But as before observed, a birth does change the circumstances and condition of the thing born, thereby exposing it to sensations not realized before the birth. If I have ever preached that there was no change whatever produced on the "Adamic man," it must have been in some fit of insanity, for I do not thus believe. If, on the occasion alluded to in the publication, the many brethren whom I have conversed with, and were present on that occasion, must have been in some strange stupor, that they did not hear it. But now for the change, not in the *nature*, (for I know of none,) but in the circumstances, condition, and a *feeling sense*, not realized before the birth. This spirit, which is born of the Spirit, is the spirit of life and light; therefore, life and light are developed in the sinner, with all the other feeling sensations. Now we *feel* that we are sinners, *see* that we are sinners, *hear* and therefore *know* that we are sinners, and under this thorough conviction, cry out, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Is not this a great change in the circumstances, condition and sensations of that sinner? But is that individual prepared to say, "My nature is changed from a bad to a good one?" No, never, while we carry with us "the body of this death." On the other hand, is the nature of that spirit, which is born of the Spirit, changed? Not at all. Before the birth it was a pure, holy spirit; it remains so forever afterward, comparable to a pure "white stone," never was black, never will be. Preserved in Jesus Christ, as free from "taint" as ever a lady preserved her fruit in a jar, whether earthen, tin, glass, silver, gold or any other kind of a one. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." Born of incorruptible seed, it remains uncorrupted. "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin."

"Though seed lie buried long in dust,
It shan't deceive our hopes;
The precious grain shall never be lost,
For grace insures the crop."

But to return to the publication. In it I am complained of, or rather it is published as one of my errors, as speaking of a spiritual seed, or children, chosen in Christ before the world was, and preserved in him. How am I to suppose that this is from brother W. Thompson's pen unadulterated, when I look into the different numbers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES over his name, and see such sentences as the following: "Adam, with all natural men actually created in him as a seed, was blessed of God with all natural blessings in earthly places; Christ, with all the spiritual family actually created in him as a seed, was blessed of God with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." And again: "The children of God in Christ from of old, in their spiritual relation, are wholly of a right seed." See brother W. Thompson on the "Two Adams," SIGNS, Vol. xvi., No. 20, date Jan. 1, 1849, and also other numbers; and also when I see in a letter now before me in his own handwriting and over his own signature the following declaration: "And let me say once for all, that the spiritual nature of the seed, both in Christ and in his members, is divine, never fell, never died, never suffered, never was nor ever will be changed in time or in eternity." Can any lady keep her fruit in a better state of preservation than that? Is that the "stock" of the Adamic man? I am seemingly complained of in the publication for saying it was "another stock." I am also charged with saying that the Adamic man "was not in any relation to Christ." But there are no fears with me that all my brethren who were there have forgotten all about that matter. Many of them will recollect that I have contended for a legal relation between Christ and this man, and explained it by the figure of a shepherd and his sheep, the surety and his debtor, and perhaps by other figures. Many of the brethren can testify that I have uniformly insisted upon the necessity of such a relation, that the sufferings of Christ, in bearing the penalty of the law, might secure legally our release, as well as for a vital and spiritual union exhibited in the figures of vine and branches, head and members, &c., which I hold to be co-existent with Christ and his bride, who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

In conclusion, allow me to say, brother Beebe, that the object of this communication is simply to set myself right before my brethren and the community, without intending or desiring to place any one wrong before them. Is it not my privilege, and is it not my right to claim it? If there is a failure in either case, permit me to say, "it is an error of the head, not of the heart;" and it is my desire and hope that you will open your columns to any of the brethren to correct me, if, in their opinion, their own case or mine, or both, have been misrepresented in relation to the circumstances alluded to.

With sentiments of the kindest regards for yourself, family and all the brotherhood, I remain your brother, most truly, but in much tribulation,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Reflections On The Aspect Of The Times And Condition Of The Saints.

TO THE SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BRETHREN SCATTERED ABROAD - MY DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: - We have fallen upon strange times, both politically and religiously, and after many deep and solemn meditations upon the present state of Zion, I feel impressed to present to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, some of my contemplations on the present condition of the people of God.

Although we are not of the world, we are still in the world, subject to the vicissitudes that convulse it from time to time, and as the children of God have generally been the greatest sufferers where order is broken up and anarchy predominates in its stead, above all others we should tread with caution every step we take, and see that we contribute nothing to the overthrow of law and order - the downfall of a wholesome government. In common with my brethren and fellow-citizens I feel a deep solicitude for the perpetuity of our civil institutions, under which we have enjoyed so many signal blessings, and over which angry clouds are scowling, hanging impendent, lowering gloomily, big with fanaticism, strife, angry bickerings and cruel jealousies, which have been too successful in begetting in the hearts of our rulers, as well as in those of many of their constituents, a feeling of deadly hate and alienation; and which appears to be sweeping as with a besom of destruction from the hearts of the people inhabiting the contending sections of our country, the last vestiges of that fraternal sensation which alone can form and perpetuate a federal Union - a national reciprocity. Should this spirit of animosity be nurtured, and the interests and blessings of the two great sections of our country so richly dispensed among us by a munificent hand, so well calculated to unite us as one great nation, and which the God of battles has bequeathed to us for a time at the expense of the treasure, the extreme sufferings, the blood and the lives of devoted, sacrificing and sacrificed patriots; I repeat, should these interests and blessings be arrayed in hostile attitudes against each other, what better can we expect as a nation than that the God who has so liberally dispensed them, and for which we have been so ungrateful, should uncurb the frenzied and fretted passions so plentifully engendered and so continually caressed by those who are ruled by them, until the civil and ecclesiastical liberties of a hitherto blessed and prosperous, but now ungrateful people, shall be torn from us, until we shall be made to wail amid the agonizing throes of an expiring republic, the last pulsation of a dying nation's heart.

In view of these threatened calamities, let us, dear brethren, with one united voice send up from every quarter, to mingle at the throne of grace, our fervent and solemn petitions to the God of hosts to reach down and interpose his almighty arm, which alone can stay the maddened tempest that seems to be drifting us to ruin, to still the angry billows that surge so fearfully around us, ere we are thrown upon the breakers, ere we

witness the appalling crash, feel the awful convulsions, and our ears be made to tingle with the death-knell of a submerged nation.

But I have wandered further in this horrid maze than was intended, and perhaps further than is commendable on this occasion. But allow me to say here, brethren, should the worst befall our guilty nation, let us kiss the rod that chastises us justly, and bow in humble submission to the righteous will of him who rules in the army of heaven and among the nations of the earth. Let us stand in our proper places, act properly in our respective spheres, and then all will be well with us.

"Though kingdoms, states and empires fall,
And dynasties decay,
Though cities crumble unto dust,
And nations die away,"

no material injury shall harm us while "the LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT reigneth." But are we standing and acting correctly as a church, consistently as the people of God? Here we approach the subject that more particularly engaged my attention in the outset.

This is a grave question; may we gravely consider it. I believe it has been made manifest in all ages that, as the church has retrograded, fanaticism has advanced in a proportionate ratio. If this be the case, it certainly behooves the church to stand forth at all times in her full strength, to present an unbroken phalanx in opposition to the wayward strides of fanatical assailants. A "crying sin" has been discovered within the last few years, and it is a little remarkable that this *sin*, as it is called, (slavery) should bear with the heaviest weight upon the consciences of those who have nothing to do with it, and therefore cannot be answerable for it. Is it not evident that from such a quarter have been heard the loudest wailings? And is it not as evident that it has been for political effect, and to attain the high places in office, and has it not been successful in an alarming degree in bringing upon us the present direful crisis?

If it is a fact that fanaticism advances as its opponent (the true church) retrogrades, and is thereby weakened, should we not look carefully and prayerfully to the position we occupy, to see that we contribute nothing, either directly or indirectly, to this alarming state of things? But is the church the advocate of order, in whom is found the quintessence of "subjection to the powers that be," standing in one unbroken phalanx, undivided, and with all her forces marshaled to resist the onward march of anti-christ in rearing up her anarchy? Now, brethren, are not the different branches and members of the church divided, and thereby weakened? And if so, what has led to those divisions? Let us look the matter full in the face, and should this be the case, inquire, "Is there not a cause?" There certainly is a cause; then let us try to search it out. I am persuaded that one great cause is to be found in the action of associations, or the manner in which such action of said bodies have been regarded by churches and members. I am aware that

associations do not now assume the arrogance that they once did; still, they are regarded by some as advisory councils, and not as a high court of appeals, as formerly considered. I object to their being considered as advisory councils. A council, religiously considered, has been in all ages looked upon as a body of persons assembled to adjust matters of difficulty, or settle matters of controverted faith. Is there any authority under heaven given to any ecclesiastical organization to meddle with these matters, save the church! She is said to be the "highest ecclesiastical order on earth;" but I say she is the only one - none superior, none subordinate or "auxiliary" to her. In relation to the present state of the church, the writer has had many, very many, as well as solemn reflections. She does appear to be "a people scattered and peeled" in a considerable degree. And why is it? Those who have traveled among and otherwise corresponded with this people to any considerable extent, cannot fail to have observed that many of the children of God who give the most satisfactory evidence that the love of God has been shed abroad in their hearts, are so situated that the free intercourse, the social union and communion with their brethren, have been hindered, bars and obstructions have been laid up between them and their brethren by professed ecclesiastical organizations, which have sundered and divided them. The humble writer of this communication, in traveling among the churches of different associations which have dropped correspondence with each other, churches that stand firm on the apostolic platform, that perhaps have had little or nothing to do with the difficulties that have torn them from their brethren, except by the vote of their *delegates*, (I object to the term; see its definition) and sometimes not even that, has been forced to the conclusion that a large proportion of the circumstances which have led to their alienation from each other, have either originated or culminated in the *mismanagement* of those organizations. Now it is to me very pleasant to meet with an association of my brethren, it matters not how large, or whether those churches participating belong to this or that or no association; and where the object is simply to engage in and carry on the social worship of our God, without meddling in any case with matters touching fellowship, the adjudication of which belongs exclusively to the churches. But the question occurs to me, Have not these *bodies ecclesiastic* (?) assumed too much, in many instances, and thereby wielded an unjustifiable amount of influence? Or rather, have not the churches in many cases yielded too much to them, by suffering themselves to be "thrust with side and shoulder," until they have been pushed from the embrace of their brethren, and forced to live as aliens and as strangers to each other? What powers have the church to delegate to any ecclesiastical body, or what powers have those delegates to fix the limits for the fellowship of churches and brethren? Does she not stand proudly pre-eminent over every other professed religious combination? Did not her Head and King decree and declare that she should "be established in the TOP of the mountains, and exalted ABOVE the hills?" Are her mansions and her members to be disjointed, pushed asunder, and barriers thrown up between by an organization having no authority under heaven to touch or meddle with their fellowship in the smallest degree? But it maybe said

that associations profess to have no authority to meddle with matters touching fellowship. But let us look at the consequences resulting from their action in many instances, their professions to the contrary notwithstanding. Differences and disputings have taken place between members (and it is to be feared, too often between preachers) belonging to different associations. The churches to which they respectively belonged may have taken up the matters and failed to adjust them. Then one of those churches is at fault, if not both of them. Now, let us make the worst of it, and say that the difficulty is such that these churches cannot fraternize each other. Well, suppose we let it rest there, provided the churches cannot, or will not, remove it. Then the matter lies between the contending parties only; and as they have originated it, let them eat all the fruits of it. There is no good reason upon earth that should urge it further, to impregnate with bitterness the cups of thousands. It is certainly good policy to confine difficulties within the narrowest possible limits. But this will not suffice in all cases; it must go up to the associations, and there undergo a litigation, and finally the correspondence is dropped; and because these have dropped correspondence, others must drop with this one and that one. Now, there are at home, following their proper avocations, thousands perhaps of orderly, sound, consistent and inoffensive brethren who have had nothing to do with all this matter, but must necessarily be implicated in too many instances, and reap the bitter consequences. Let us pause and ask the question, Is there one solitary word in the scriptures to authorize or justify such a course? But what are some of the consequences resulting from such a course of things? Perhaps a minister sets out on a preaching tour, one who is called of God to minister to the saints. His route runs through the bounds of some of these associations that have closed their correspondence. He sends on his appointments to some of the churches; they reach their destination. A point of *order* is raised. "No," says a brother, perhaps a preacher, "it will never do; it is not order to open our door for that man to preach." But why? "The correspondence is dropped." But this is not all. There are perhaps hundreds of worthy brethren identified with these different associations who have lived for years in harmony, fraternized each other cordially, and enjoyed each other's fellowship with the sweetest reciprocity. They exchange friendly visits, talk of their trials and temptations, their joys and deliverances. They feel alike, tell over, as formerly, their doctrinal views, and on all fundamental points they see alike. Next, they go to church, and perhaps hear a good, old fashioned, sound sermon preached; under it they rejoice alike. Then, may be, the Lord's table is set, and then comes up the question of order again. Probably the case has been anticipated, and according to the decision had on it, "it won't do to invite that brother or sister to participate." Why not? "The correspondence has been dropped." They return, and are about to separate. Says brother A, "Well, brother B, I thank you kindly for your seasonable and very pleasant visit; have been much comforted and edified with your conversation." "I too," responds brother B, "have been highly gratified and much refreshed with your conversation, as well as with the excellent sermon we heard preached." "But," says brother A, "I feel sorry, very sorry,

that we could not ask you to partake with us at the table, but hope you will not entertain hard thoughts toward me about it, as it is a matter of *order*." "Not at all, brother A, but have we any scripture to justify this kind of a course?" "As to that, brother B, I cannot say; but you know that it is an established *custom* among us, and we must be governed by it." And thus it goes; although their hearts were "knit together in love," on separating, their cups are dashed with vinegar. But the foregoing related case would be one of the most pleasant circumstances attending such divisions.

The great difficulty is, that thousands of otherwise sound and consistent Baptists get their prejudices enlisted against each other, and the mutual interchange of christian reciprocity and fellowship is almost as effectually cast off as if they were excluded. Now, although it is urged in behalf of associations that they profess not to settle matters of fellowship, I know of but two ways that they could lessen the evils consequent upon their action in the case of difficulties brought before them for their litigation. One would be, to assume the authority of the church at once, and exclude one or both of the contending parties, and let the matter rest there. Would not this be better than to take up and investigate those cases, when we profess not to have the authority to settle them, when the general tendency has been to give them a greater notoriety, a more wide-spread influence, involve hundreds of others in the controversies, raise jealousies, scatter firebrands broadcast among scores of brethren, blighting their comforts and alienating them in their affections? This, as the case is looked upon by many, amounts to little if anything less in effect than exclusion by *wholesale*, and that of many who have had as little to do with the subject in dispute as has "the man in the moon." But there is another way, and I think a far better one to lessen the evil, (as none of us will admit that an association should assume the authority to formally exclude a member,) and that is, when matters or questions of difficulty come before associations from the churches, simply to send them back to the proper tribunal, where a KING reigns in righteousness, and PRINCES rule in judgment, the only one on earth that the King has authorized to meddle with the fellowship and faith of God's elect. Judging from the foregoing remarks, some may suppose that the writer of this article is opposed to the holding of associations altogether. This, however, is not the case, provided they are properly conducted. He has realized many pleasant scenes at those interviews, as well as having seen others to deplore. He is aware, too, that they do not now assume the dictatorial attitude that they once did. And perhaps, too, more troubles and sad consequences resulting from the actions of associations are occasioned by the manner in which they are viewed by many, than otherwise. But as it is, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt," and would earnestly seek a remedy.

J. F. JOHNSON.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Removal To Georgetown, Kentucky.

Georgetown, Ky., March 28, 1861.

BROTHER BEEBE: - As I have removed to the above named place, editors and friends will please address myself and family at Georgetown, Scott Co., Ky., and not Lexington, Ky., as formerly.

I see a communication in the last received number of the SIGNS, over the name of J. F. Johnson, to be continued. I suppose you guessed it was from him, as he does not recollect signing the manuscript. You, however, did not miss it far; but the continuation must be postponed a little, in consequence of perplexity in removing. I will endeavor to comply with brother D. C. Byram's request at the earliest opportunity.

Yours, as ever,

J. F. JOHNSON.

I Cor.6:15.

Georgetown, Ky., June 5, 1861.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - In number six, of the current volume of the SIGNS, brother D. C. Byram, of Illinois, has requested my views on 1 Cor. vi. 15, which reads: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid."

I am heartily gratified with the freedom that brother Byram has used in this case. He is to me an esteemed brother, and in this instance my esteem is heightened toward him. When we hear a brother advance what we do not fully understand, how much better it is for us to confer with him on the subject than to find fault, and undertake to explain to others what is obscure to us. In this way we may unintentionally misrepresent a brother, wound each other, and thereby the cause that is dear to us all. My brother has my hearty thanks for the freedom he has used, and I will do the very best I can in compliance with his request. It shall be my aim in the first place to show in what sense our bodies are the members of Christ. Paul, in his epistle to the Col. i, 26, 27, speaks of a mystery that has been hid from ages and generations, but is now made manifest to the saints, and says to

his brethren that the mystery is, "Christ in you the hope of glory." In this sublime mystery, Christ and his Father makes their abode with us, and our bodies are therefore temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. See John xiv. 23, and 1 Cor. vi. 19. And again it is said, 1 Cor. ii. 16, we have the mind of Christ. Here then, is a most powerful influence to operate upon our bodies, one able to control and make them subservient to that indwelling power. The members of our bodies are insusceptible of action without a principle or law to govern them. In the absence of Christ in us, our members are under the control of a carnal mind that is enmity against God, which mind is the principle or law that governs them. This mind is not destroyed by the indwelling of the mind of Christ; hence, Paul had a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind (the mind of Christ which he had) and bringing him into captivity, &c., and this he calls *another* law, in contrariety to the law of God, in which he delighted "after the inward man." This was an opposing principle, one calculated to produce a counteraction, and cause him to yield his "members as instruments of righteousness unto God." It is in consequence of these two counteracting principles, that with the same tongue we "bless God" and "curse man," that out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. As God works in his children to will and to do of his good pleasure, and is able to subdue all things unto himself, he can control all the members that compose our entire bodies, and thereby cause our hearts to understand as they should, our eyes to see things as they should, our ears to hear as they should, our feet to walk where they should go, our hands to act as they should; and, in short, it is in consequence of this indwelling power alone that we are enabled to keep under our bodies and bring them into subjection.

Now "*the church of Christ is the body of Christ*," and is composed, as organized here, of baptized believers. Each of these believers then, is a member of that body; and as Christ dwells in them and they have his mind; this Christ and mind operates upon each member of that body as really and effectually as does our natural mind upon the natural members of our body, and therefore our bodies are thus as really the members of Christ, as are our natural members the members of our natural body.

But for some wise purpose, known only to God, it has pleased him to leave us at times under the influence of our natural or carnal mind. The tuition of the mother of harlots and her daughters is congenial with that mind, which constitutes the law that governs our members, and that wars against the law of our mind, (the mind of Christ,) and thus brings us into captivity. When the children of God yield to that unhallowed influence, they make their bodies the members of an harlot. As said the apostle, so say I, "God forbid" that they should thus yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto iniquity.

Brother Byram refers to a sermon preached by me at the White Water Association, 1859, "which discourse," he says, "I heard, and heard nothing that I could condemn." And again he says, "yet there were some things that I could not as fully comprehend and understand as I could wish, yet I could not say but that it was truth, and sustained by the scriptures; yet this passage I cannot reconcile with those views." It is certainly the

privilege and indisputable right of the saints to call in question any idea that their servants may advance which seems to conflict with any portion of the scriptures. If one text is antagonistical to any opinion we have, all are. But I cannot see anything in this text to conflict with any idea that I have, or with any one that I have heretofore held or advanced. I have uniformly contended that the christian was a complex being, composed of two different and opposing natures, one heavenly, the other earthly. Those natures are apparent in actions, good and bad, religiously considered; and those actions are either right or wrong, as they are prompted by a good or bad principle. Those two principles are the two laws that control all our actions. By acting under the suggestions of the spirit of anti-christ, a bad principle, Paul suggests that we may make our bodies the members of an harlot. If not, why the precautionary question, "Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot?" This is a very necessary caution, one that the children of God should carefully observe, one that is essentially necessary in order to their comfort while here. Is it not a lamentable fact that many of them are now entangled in the meshes of that drag that is used by the daughters of the mother of harlots, and thus making their bodies the members of an harlot? Or, in other words, are not their actions and speech to too great an extent governed by that evil spirit or principle which they imbibe from those harlots? I suppose there must be some of them in that category; if not, why should the Lord say to them, "Come out of her, my people?" It seems, however, that although they make their bodies the members of an harlot, it does not destroy his title to them, for he says, *My people*. In the following verse it is said, "What! know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh." This unholy alliance or illegitimate marriage with the old mother's daughters, and thereby making their bodies the members of harlots, is bad business for the children of God.

I conclude then that whenever we "put on Christ," or unite with the church, "*the body of Christ*," we become *manifestly* the members of that body, and therefore our *bodies* - visibly and legally - are the members of Christ, and then there is a most solemn obligation resting upon us on the one hand, and it is our best interest on the other, not to make our bodies the members of a harlot by "yielding our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto iniquity;" for, to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey, his servants we are to whom we obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.

I have now given my honest views on the text, and know not that they are the sentiments of any other one; and if you, brother Beebe, think it advisable, present them through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES to brother Byram and others of your readers, for the investigation of better judges than the humble writer; and, in the meantime, I have the confidence in the subjects of grace to believe and desire, that they may not endorse them unless they are sustained by the scriptures.

Your brother, most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Isaiah 33:20-22.

Georgetown, Ky., July 4, 1861.

BROTHER BEEBE: - In twelfth number of the present Volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, brother F. M. Casey, of Mississippi, has asked for my views on the 20th, 21st and 22nd verses of the xxxiii. chapter of Isaiah. He trusts that he "loves the truth as it is in Jesus," and has "a fervent desire to follow my Master." These considerations alone are sufficient to induce me, incompetent as I feel, to try at least to comply with his request. Brother Casey is an entire stranger to me in the flesh, I hope not in the Spirit. The verses read as follows:

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us."

This was no doubt a prospective or prophetic view which the prophet had of Zion in her organization and superstructure by, and her superintendence and government under her King and Lawgiver.

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities" As a city, Zion stands unrivaled by any. Her superstructure, defense, provision, her glory and perpetuity, all exhibit the wisdom, the power and fullness of the great Architect. She is "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The inhabitant of Zion "shall dwell on high, his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure." "His foundation is in the holy mountain;" and he says, "upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." She is invincible without doubt, and "we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about her forever, and he is the glory in the midst of her. She shall then, and she will survive the wreck of kingdoms and the crash of worlds; for surely there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in her help. The eternal God is her refuge, and beneath her are the everlasting arms. She shall dwell in safety alone. Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is

like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord? She is "the city of our solemnities." Solemn, because God dwells there! The consideration of his august and gloriously holy presence should fill us with a solemn and yet a pleasing awe. Does he, in his amazing condescension, deign to dwell with us, poor, unworthy, fallen and self-degraded sinners? Surely, then, when we enter his courts to serve him in his tabernacle, solemnity should characterize all our devotions, and we should "sing praises unto thy name, O Most High, upon the harp with a solemn sound."

"Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation." We look around us, and see everywhere exhibited the ferocity of the wolf, the leopard, the lion and the bear. Their ferocious dispositions and thirst for blood are comparable to our carnal and uncultivated natures, which can only be checked by the reigning power of grace. Instance the case of Saul of Tarsus of the tribe of Benjamin. It is said, Gen. xlix. 27, "Benjamin shall raven as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." But grace must reign in regal triumph; for "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together." It is further said, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all thy holy mountain." Thus is presented a beautiful symbol of the quietude of this habitation and the unpromising materials of which it is composed. Were it not a fact that our ferocious dispositions are only curbed and not destroyed in this mode of existence, we should see Zion, even here, at all times, a quiet habitation. But, although she must be subject to "wars, and fightings" for a little while, she will enjoy perfect quietude by-and-by.

"A tabernacle that shall not be taken down." The prophet probably had allusion here to that beautiful tent erected by Moses for the service of God while the children of Israel were journeying in the wilderness, and alluded to by the apostle in the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. It was a portable dwelling, in which the priests conducted the service of God, who there manifested himself to Israel; and it was separated into two divisions by a curtain or veil. The first was called "the holy place;" the second "the most holy," or "holiest of all." The priests went always into the first tabernacle (or division), accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people - a beautiful typical illustration of the church of Christ, as she is situated partly here and partly in her most holy place, where her all-glorious High Priest entered for her, having obtained her eternal redemption from the curse of the law by his own blood. She constitutes but one building, separated by a veil only into two divisions; hence, in this tabernacle or kingdom, we sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *She shall not be taken down.*

Though rumbling thunders round this tent may roar,

Though tempests rage and billows lash the shore,
God hovers round; he keeps the hallowed place;
She stands a monument of reigning grace!

Environed with impregnable walls, fortified by almighty bulwarks (see Isaiah xxvi. 1), massive towers and well-guarded palaces, reared by an omnipotent hand, with the power of the Eternal hovering round her, she may fearlessly bid defiance to her most potent enemies. Though "every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood," this tabernacle shall stand; and though the din of battle and the clash of weapons may be heard, and fury rage all round her, each inmate shall achieve the victory and wear the victor's crown at last, and although hosts of enemies may encamp around her, they may join the chorus:

"In hope of that immortal crown,
We now the cross sustain;
And gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain."

"Not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords be broken." In pitching a tent or tabernacle in a tempestuous region, it is essential that it should have sufficient fastening. For this purpose stakes are often used, which are firmly settled in the ground; then cords are attached to the tabernacle and fastened to the stakes. If the stakes are sufficiently strong and well fastened, and the cords such as cannot be broken, the superstructure will stand. Now we have the figure before us; what does it teach? I suppose that the stakes here exhibit the promises of God. The inviolability of a promise depends upon the veracity and power of the promiser. If his integrity is doubtless and his power sufficient in all cases of emergency, we need not question the stability of the promise. God is the promiser here, and when he promised our father Abraham an heir, "he considered not his own body dead when he was about an hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb." He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform. An excellent pattern for us. The promise was made before the world began, by God that CANNOT LIE. Jesus, our Surety and Redeemer, is the keeper of the covenant and promises; "for all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us." The new covenant is established upon these promises, and they are exceeding great and precious promises. That the stakes, or promises of God, are immovable we cannot doubt for a moment. Shall we now examine the cords that bind the tabernacle to the stakes? I think that the love of God is portrayed here. Said the Lord to Israel and Ephraim, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." Ephraim at one time was "joined to his idols," but that did not break the cords;

at another he is "a cake not turned;" still they are secure; God can turn him and cause him to repent. Israel revolts more and more; still the cords are inseverable. Said the Lord, "Ephraim compasseth me about with lies and the house of Israel with deceit; but Judah yet ruleth with God and is faithful with the saints." Notwithstanding all this, still he says, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still; I will surely have mercy upon him." Israel's revolts and rebellions were many, but yet we hear him say, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." "I will be a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born." "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord." Not one that he loves will he ever cease to love, not one of the cords shall be broken.

"Drawn by such cords we onward move,
Till round the throne we meet;
And captives in the chains of love,
Embrace our Conqueror's feet."

"But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams." John, when on the Isle of Patmos, was shown a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. The tree of life (Christ) stood in the midst and on either side of it. In the day that the Lord should stand on the Mount of Olives, Zechariah saw that "living waters should go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea and half of them toward the hinder sea, in summer and in winter." The perpetual fountain and fullness of our Lord Jesus Christ is here brought to view. This exhaustless fountain was not to be confined exclusively to the former, nor latter dispensation, to Jews, nor Gentiles; but spread its vitalizing, thirst assuasive, heart-cheering and soul-soothing virtue over the whole garden of God; to cause the pomegranates to bud, the lilies to bloom, the spices to flow out, the parched ground to become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water. Its fertilizing excellence makes the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. The thirsty plants shall drink the reviving streams and bud, and flourish, and bloom, and bring forth fruit. From the top of the throne from whence the waters proceed an encouraging voice is heard, saying, "Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen, for I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses."

"Ho, ye that pant for living streams,

And pine away and die;
Here you may quench your raging thirst,
With springs that never dry."

"Wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby." Some knowledge of this kind of water vessel is necessary to understand the import of this metaphorical expression. These boats were much used by some of the ancient nations, and sometimes built of enormous size, with rows of benches on each side, and often with several tiers, one above another, on which those plying the oars sat. It was customary with some of the early nations, when prisoners were taken in their wars, to confine them in their galley boats to work their oars; and these were called galley-slaves. In process of time sails were added to those boats, which gave them a far more gallant appearance. Perhaps none excelled in gallantry more than those owned by the celebrated Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, in which she first visited Antony, one of the Roman Triumvirs, and in which she afterwards accompanied him, with his and her fleet when on their voyage to encounter Octavius Caesar, which circumstance resulted in their total defeat. Her sails were of fine purple, her vessel flamed with gold, the oars were inlaid with silver, and kept time to the richest music. Rome and Egypt seemed there to unite their gallantry. Probably the prophet could not have selected more appropriate figures to exhibit the Arminian working and windy system than those galley boats and gallant ships. Take a galley with oars and place it on a calm sea where there is neither wind nor current, and it will come to a dead stand-still. So with the work-mongrel system. Let its advocates cease their "efforts" in proselyting and money making, and the whole machinery will come to a halt. Again, when the galley-slaves take their places to ply their oars, their backs are turned upon the point they design to reach; in like manner, when the work-monger settles himself down upon the effort system his back is turned upon all that is heavenly or heavenward. Rouse then to action, and,

"To work they go to speed the race;
Heave on they must, or fall from grace;
Or, if not that, still work they must,
For in their works they put their trust."

Let us pursue the similitude a little further. As before observed, the ship with sails makes a more gallant appearance. In the absence of oars or some other locomotive it is dependent on the wind for its speed. The sails are so arranged that they are easily shifted to catch the breeze from different points. False doctrines are comparable to the wind; therefore Paul desired that him and his brethren should not be carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Now, when a current breeze of false doctrine arises, it matters not from what

point it comes, provided it is popular, it is an easy matter for the Babylonian crew to shift their sails to suit the gale, that they may drive ahead rapidly. It may be a tract society breeze, a bible society breeze, or a religious lottery or rag baby breeze, or an anti-whisky breeze, or an anti-slavery breeze, or any other breeze that adds to the breeze, the popularity, gallantry and splendor of the vessel and crew. But, notwithstanding all the tugging at the oars and shifting the sails, and all the speed they make, they cannot go in nor even pass by that place of broad rivers and streams, for the battle is not to the strong nor the race to the swift.

"For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us." Our judge. By a cursory view this expression might fill us with dismay. When we see him seated upon his throne of judgment and justice, in whose august presence we are immediately and sensibly brought, conscious of all our guilt, thoroughly convinced that the all-seeing and omniscient Judge scrutinizes all our guilt, whether in thought, word or act, are assured that he "will by no means clear the guilty," what can we expect but condemnation and banishment from his presence forever? We can take no appeal from that dread tribunal. We are cut off from all hope of an appeal from two considerations. First, the acknowledgement of our guilt precludes all possibility of an appeal; and, secondly, there is no higher tribunal before which to make one. How can we hope for justification then, when, in order to be justified, we must be pronounced guiltless? All human courts would utterly fail to justify us in this case, and therefore "TEKEL" would necessarily be written against us before them. But glory, honor and praise be given to our adorable Judge; our sins are charged to him - he bears them in his own body upon the tree as our surety, and imputes his righteousness to us. "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," in consequence of which he can say, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee," and thus "justify the ungodly." Our lawgiver has blessed us with a wholesome code for the government of Zion. Time and space forbid that we should attend to all the points in this code. The great and momentous one is love. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law," and "therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Said our Savior, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you."

"Happy the heart where graces reign,
Where love inspires the breast;
Love is the brightest of the train,
And strengthens all the rest."

Reciprocal love adjusts the differences of saints, draws them to the house of God in company, sweetens their reports there, keeps them in peace, causes them "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together."

"The Lord is our king; he will save us." Although he is Lord of lords and King of kings, the almighty ruler of all things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, controlling the smallest atom as well as the most stupendous sphere - the little animalcule and the mightiest monarch; yet is he in a special manner "King of saints." For them he builds up kingdoms and pulls down empires - he works all things for their good. In one sense he "hath saved us," having redeemed us from all iniquity, and therefore "from the curse of the law;" and in another, "he will save us" from all the trials, tribulations and thralldom of every description.

When that great salvation shall have been fully consummated we shall realize more fully the magnitude of that momentous mission that brought the Savior to this abode of wretchedness to save us from our sins.

"Salvation, joy inspiring theme!
Salvation to the Lamb;
Salvation we'll ascribe to him,
To him, the great I AM."

Thrice hallowed be his name for the stupendous work of his free and eternal salvation. Let all his saints praise him while here, for they shall certainly crown him with ceaseless praises when victory over the last enemy perches on their banner.

Your brother and servant, most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

I Corinthians 9:16.

Georgetown, Ky., August 13, 1861.

BROTHER BEEBE: - In the 15th number of the present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES I find the following:

"Will J. F. Johnson give his views on 1 Cor. ix. 16, latter part, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." JAMES MARTINDALE.

I often fear to give my views on scripture, lest I should throw a sable cloud over its native brilliancy, rather than exhibit it in its native beauty and clearness.

I have been acquainted with brother Martindale for a number of years, and have no doubt of his sincere desire to understand the scriptures and be governed by their dictation. The dark and barren state of my mind at present would forbid my attempting an elucidation of the text, were it not that I know that the Lord can direct me right if it is his will that brother Martindale or others shall be profited by this feeble effort to comply with his request. Should I darken the subject with words without knowledge, he can throw off the mask and present it to his children with all its truth and importance. The verse containing the text referred to reads thus: "For if I preach the gospel I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." If I had all the wisdom of this whole world I would have nothing to glory of, for God makes foolish the wisdom of this world, and chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. If possessed of the strongest intellectual powers, embellished and aided by the eloquence of the finest rhetorician, and garnished with the finish and all the splendor of scientific attainments, and then could wield it all with the strength of Samson, I should have nothing to glory of; for God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty. Should the land of Ophir pour all her gold into my lap, and all the world beside confer upon me her wealth, her honor and her fame, still I should have nothing to glory of; for, with all this, I should be beggared without thee, O my God.

"Were I possessor of the earth,
And called the stars my own,
Without thy graces and thyself,
I were a wretch undone."

Then, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth me," &c. Then, if I am foolish in myself, that is no excuse for me to neglect the duty that my Lord has enjoined upon me; if I am weak, that should not discourage me; if poor, what of that! If God chooses to take me, foolish, weak and poor, as I am, to confound the wise, the strong and the noble, let not all this terrify me while "necessity is laid upon me."

The word *necessity* signifies: compulsion, fatality, indispensableness, want, need, poverty, etc.

Now, I think that the work of grace is the complete counterplot of the work of our carnal and depraved minds. When necessity seems to urge upon us the accomplishment of some earthly design, or the attainment of some earthly object, we cannot be persuaded to undertake the task without some evidence that we have the mental power or physical ability to succeed. Not so when the Lord undertakes to prepare us by his grace for the respective places in his kingdom and the services we are to perform there. If the Lord

ever taught me the necessity of my salvation from sin, he taught me first that I had neither wisdom or power to accomplish any part of that work. If he ever prepared me for a place in his kingdom, he taught me first that the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue was of him and not of me; that I had neither skill or power to prepare myself; that I was wholly incompetent and unworthy of a seat upon the humblest footstool of his children. If the Lord ever saw fit to prepare me for the work of the ministry - to feed, comfort or instruct his children - it was a clear case of necessity on my part, a compulsion, fatality, an indispensability; for all was want, need, poverty with me. Therefore I said once, when my mind was meditating on this subject, to an elderly father in the gospel, "Is it not hard for me to be compelled to try to do a thing which I know I cannot do?" It certainly is not meet that we should consult our strength, our wisdom, our righteousness, our qualifications in any way, but fall wholly and helpless upon the arm of him who is "our everlasting strength," our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, our all, with a feeling sense and humble acknowledgement that we are insufficient for these things, each one crying to him,

"A guilty, weak and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall; ,
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all."

"Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." Either by an omission of my brother M., or a typographical mistake, the word "unto" does not appear in the text as presented, yet I think it a necessary part of it.

This word "woe" we understand to mean grief, sorrow, misery, calamity, etc. We suppose, then, the apostle meant to inform us that if he did not preach the gospel (necessity being laid upon him,) that grief, sorrow and calamity would be his portion; and I think that such will be the portion of all God's children who disobey his mandates. An elderly and highly esteemed brother in the ministry once told me that a young brother (his son-in-law) ventured to speak to him on the subject of his exercise about preaching, and that he told him never to attempt it as long as he could keep from it, or words to that amount. I have no doubt as to the genuineness of that young man's exercise for he has since proved to be a useful and able minister of the New Testament. Again, I have heard brethren tell the Lord's children, after hearing a satisfactory evidence and reason of the hope that was in them, to stay away from the church as long as they could. Now, much of a Predestinarian as I am, I do not think that such expressions are appropriate in such cases. There is such a thing spoken of in the scriptures as disobedience. I believe, too, we are taught that it is wrong. If the Lord commands one of his children, then, and they disobey, they do wrong; while obedience is right - yes, "better than sacrifice." Let me not,

then, tell the Lord's children to do wrong as long as they can. I am no way fearful that they will not do wrong enough without telling them to.

True, there is a rod for the disobedient child (see Psa. lxxxix. 30-33), yet if I command my child, I think it is just as pleasant for me and the child both for it to obey without a whipping as with it. The rod often comes in the form of grief, sorrow, calamity, which probably my brother has realized. Paul said he was not disobedient to the heavenly call, and I wish we could all say so. He, however, was not entirely exempt from grief, sorrow, and so on. When he preached the gospel willingly he had a reward, but if against his will, still a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him. Then let us all try to obey willingly. It is very pleasant when we can preach the gospel having our whole will swallowed up in the matter; but if against our will, we have to grope and blunder along in the dark, it is not so pleasant; yet this is no proof that a dispensation of the gospel is not committed to us.

But I suppose that the great desideratum with brother M. is the same that is with many others of us - that is, have we sufficient evidence that the Lord has required this solemn and important work at our hands? Now I fear that I shall fail to satisfy my brother in this case, from the fact that my own evidence is so feeble, and my experience (if I have any in the case) so limited that I never have been able to satisfy myself that I had a right to engage in that solemn and momentous business. But, as before intimated, I do believe that if the Lord ever taught me anything about it, he convinced me in the first place that I was altogether incompetent for the work. Then I thought it the most egregious folly for me to worry and perplex myself about engaging in a business that I was confident I could not accomplish. I cannot say that I had any miraculous display of power, any visible exhibition of a supernatural light, any audible voice speaking to me sufficient to carry me beyond "Doubting Castle" relative to preaching the gospel. It is true that I had many serious meditations on the subject, and some particular texts of scripture were often the subjects of these reflections; particularly, "necessity is laid upon me," and "keep not silence," (Isa. lxii. 6) played upon my mind no little, with some others. I have judged, too, sometimes, by what I have seen, or thought I have seen in others, when perhaps I should have been attending to my own case. Sometimes I see preachers and become convinced that they think that they can preach fine; then I am very apt to think that they cannot. Then, again, I see some that appear to think that they cannot preach well, and I think they can. So it may be thought, and perhaps with propriety too, that I am a contrary kind of a being at best. But if I were asked whence I derived the most satisfactory evidence that it was my duty and privilege to preach the gospel, I think I should say, *from the church*. More than thirty years ago I professed, (and I hope sincerely) to yield my poor sinful self up to the Lord and to his church. In doing that I was certainly placed under the strongest obligations to obey the mandates of my King as delivered to his kingdom. I firmly believe, too, that that kingdom or church has "the mind of Christ" to direct them. That church, directed by the mind, as I hope, was pleased to set me apart as her servant. I felt

my insufficiency, that I was unfit, unworthy, unqualified. But, with all that, who was I, or what right had I to say nay? In effect, she reiterated the command of her Lawgiver, *Go and preach the gospel*. But even this did not cause all my doubts, to subside. She might be governed by a carnal mind, as all her members while here have one, and therefore might be mistaken, as churches sometimes are, no doubt. Still I must not disobey, but give her an opportunity to judge of me. Well, while I have been under her eye and supervision with all my waywardness, weakness and shortcomings, in view of all that, she has still seemed to say, *go on*. Her forbearance has been wonderful toward me, and would be more so, if forbear she could, and see me as I see myself. At times I have thought that it would be a relief to me if the church would tell me that she thought me not profitable, and seat me with her private members, even as it were in the humblest capacity. At other times I have felt, and even now feel like taking the responsibility upon myself and quietly retiring from the service. Then comes that "woe," and causes me to dread the consequences. Then I think again,

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,
In a believer's ear;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear."

And that, although I have often been made to drink the very dregs of bitterness, the few cheering draughts and sustaining feasts I have received of the new wine of the kingdom and the bread of life, and the hope, and to me the apparent evidence that I have been enabled, out of my Master's fullness, to administer some of the same delightful repast to my Father's hungry and thirsty children, encourages me still to go on, notwithstanding all my imbecility and disqualification.

Having been for some time past acquainted with brother Martindale, I will, in the conclusion of my remarks, venture to drop to him, or others that may be placed in a similar condition, a few words of advice. My dear brother, I have the most satisfactory evidence that you have been manifestly brought under the supervision of a wise, and kind Counsellor, and that you are fortunately located among those who "have the mind of Christ." Go first to that Counsellor who fully understands the whole of your case and how to treat it; and you can freely acknowledge to him that you have no strength to apply in the case; and you know that he requires no such aid. Fall at his feet and implore his counsel to direct and his strength to enable you to do his will. If you should not receive a satisfactory response, go to the church, who have his mind, and lay your case fully before the brethren. If they direct you to go and preach the gospel, tarry not to muse over your weakness and unfitness, while you have a mouth to be filled with a tongue in it;

"Let not conscience make you linger,

Nor of fitness fondly dream,"

but go on and try, and try again. Your brethren can have no other way of arriving at a correct conclusion but by hearing you; and I feel confident, after the long and intimate acquaintance I have had with them, that they will deal faithfully with you. That God may bless you, my dear brother, and the brethren and sisters at Salem, and in all other places, with his counsel and his consoling presence, is my prayer for his dear name's sake.

Truly as ever, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Reflections Of The Times & Condition Of The Saints. Part II.

Georgetown, Ky., August, 1861.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - In the 6th No., present Vol. of the SIGNS, was published a communication written by the humble writer of this article, respecting the divided state of Zion, and said, "To be continued." It was thought by me that the continuation would be soon; but the throng of business, and complying with requests for my views on other subjects through the SIGNS, prolonged the delay until I concluded to let it pass without further attention, supposing that all I could say on the subject would be of but little importance. But latterly a number of brethren have inquired why it was not continued; and more recently I received a letter from a highly esteemed brother and minister of Illinois, and in behalf of others, urging its continuation. So much time has elapsed, and my mind has been so variously occupied, that I fear the affinity of the two articles will be but slight. When we speak of a divided state of Zion, we mean what we say. Sometimes the Hagarenes creep in among us unawares, and have to be cast out, as their elder brother was, but that is not dividing Zion.

What is meant by a divided state of Zion, is, the separation of her own children, thus depriving them of that sociality in their worship wherein they cordially fraternize each other, "comfort one another," "bear one another's burdens," "comfort themselves together and edify one another," &c. Now, that such divisions exist in our country is very evident; and that it adds much to the dark gloom that appalls and the icy clime that benumbs is quite as evident. O that we could find the remedy that would unite *the children of God*, [no others] and cause them to "dwell together in unity." How good and how pleasant it would be.

My brother of Illinois, in his letter, says: "As you have observed, there certainly is a cause, there also certainly is a remedy. Hence the important inquiry is, what is the remedy and to whom shall we look for it? Dear brother Johnson, we earnestly request you to, and hope you will continue this subject, and point out the remedy; for we feel that it is a

subject of vital importance to us, as a people, seeing we are so much divided and scattered, and thus weakened and discouraged. To whom does the work of filling up and healing the breaches in our ranks properly belong? To the churches or to the associations? Some of our brethren think it will not do for the churches to do anything in the premises, but we must wait until the associations move in the matter." My brother adds, "Now, I think this is all wrong;" and so say I. My brethren, I have not the vanity to suppose that I can do much in this case, but if I can contribute but a mite, even in calling the attention of other and abler ones to the subject, and thereby comfort one of the downcast children of my Father, I shall be compensated. My earnest desire is to heal, not to hurt the daughter of God's people, comfort, not to cast down, to make peace, not war and fighting among them; for the Lord knows we have enemies enough to fight without making them of each other. But to the question of my brother, "to whom does this work belong, to the churches, or to the associations? Suppose one should say, "to the associations," where will he get his rule or authority to work? Not in the scriptures, certainly. Not one word is found there to direct their action in such cases, nor even to show that they had an existence in the days of the apostles; and therefore they act in the premises under no other authority than by the commandments of men. But perhaps, before we attempt to apply the remedy, we should examine the patient, and endeavor to ascertain the nature of her complaint. Is it stupor or over-excitement? The two conditions are radically different and require different treatment. When there is much excitability we require sedatives to palliate and soothe the inflamed parts; and if a state of languor prevails, we want stimulants to rouse the system to a more vigorous; and healthy action. These two states of disease are extremes, and one is apt to follow in the wake of the other. When there is an over-excitement in the system, so as to produce disease, a proportionate degree of stupor following is a natural consequence, and either extreme is a diseased state.

Now, I think that the general state of Zion, so far as my acquaintance extends, is rather a stupor; that she is languid, chilly and drowsy, and if we search for the cause we shall probably ascertain that it is a consequence of previous over-excitement, particularly in the western part of our country, where associations exercise something nearer an administrative power in handling exciting matters than they do in the east. Hence divisions have been more frequent as well as more extensive west than east. I was pleased some years ago when a query was sent to the Baltimore Association (by a church,) when the association wisely decided that she had no authority to meddle in such cases, and sent it back to the proper place for the adjudication of such matters, the church. That perhaps closed one avenue, to a heated controversy, and a consequent division on a large scale. But let us examine the origin and progress of these inflammatory cases. Perhaps one member has become excited and inflamed; it has spread to another, and another, then to the church (it ought never to go further,) then to the association, thence to other associations, until it has finally spread over the whole body, in a large section of country, causing the death (of the religious enjoyment) of the entire body.

I knew two gentlemen in Indiana; each one received a mere scratch on his finger, producing inflammation, which was communicated to the other fingers, the hand, the arm, and then the body, resulting in the death of both men. These little inflammatory cases should be strictly watched and well attended to; use emollients to soothe, palliate and soften the inflamed parts. Such applications are generally found to be the best, and therefore should be used first, and the inflammation arrested in that way if possible. But if that course proves ineffectual, recourse must be had to more stringent remedies. Sometimes practitioners have recourse to caustics to arrest certain kinds of inflammation; but if all other remedies fail, amputation is the last resort. That is a trying case, yet, better have recourse to it than that the whole body perish, even should it be the right hand, or foot, or any other member, however valuable it may have been. Take a retrospective view, brethren, and mark the progress of similar cases to a scratched finger. One member has been disaffected, and has affected others; then the case has been carried to the church, where first sedatives (gentle measures) should have been used; they failing, next the cautery (sharp rebuke if necessary); and both of these applications failing, then amputation (exclusion), and thus stop such cases within their legitimate boundaries, for they ought never be suffered, under any circumstances, to go beyond the bounds of the church in any other way than by exclusion.

But, alas! by the inventions of men there has been a way sought out to carry them up to the top of a would-be higher mountain, whence they have been flung to the winds and drifted like a cloud of famished locusts, galling and devouring the reciprocal enjoyments of thousands, and that by a high-handed usurpation, too, for we repeat, there is no authority given in the Bible for carrying offenses outside of the limits of the church, but by throwing them out (with those who cause them) into the world where they properly belong. But scenes of high excitement having done their work, have rather passed away, and a morbid, debilitated, chilly stupor prevails to a great extent, as the legitimate result, requiring something to stimulate, brace up and rouse to a healthy action all the different parts of the body, producing a medium state or equilibrium between those two extremes. But where are the curatives and who is to administer them? We will all agree that they are to be found in the good Physician, the great repository in whom "dwells all fullness," "all spiritual blessings," with "healing in his wings," in whom is found also "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" - wisdom not only to apply himself in every time of need, but to supply his people with in every emergency - knowledge that fully comprehends and surveys every calamity that can threaten or afflict his people in any age, clime, country or condition, together with all the aims, means and artifices that their subtle enemy can use against them or distill into the minds of his cohorts to be so used. There, brethren, are all the necessary curatives for his people, and he has successfully applied them so far as their eternal release from the dominion and condemning power of sin is concerned, by living for them, dying for them, and rising for their justification.

He ascended on high, led captivity captive, received and gave gifts unto men. He set up his kingdom, or church, gave her prophets, apostles, teachers, &c., with a perfect code of laws, rules and precedents, containing everything necessary or profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction or instruction in righteousness. Who ever heard of such a setting up or furnishing of any synod, conference, council or association? No assemblage, no organization, either political or ecclesiastical, beneath the heavens, has a shadow of authority afforded them in the scriptures to meddle in the smallest degree with the administrative affairs of this spiritual kingdom, save the church. She has undoubted and exclusive authority to act in the premises - verbally from the sacred lips of the KING, who reigns in righteousness, and from the PRINCES who rule in judgment - holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

But no longer do we hear his verbal voice to cheer and instruct us, no longer have we men in the flesh thus inspired; but, blessed be his name, he has bequeathed to us that code contained in the scriptures, and we are to read them, search them, study them, and we should appropriate, appreciate and apply them. Preparatory to this he opens our understanding, that we may understand them. Dear brethren, let us try to attend to them as spoken verbally by Him who spake as never man spake, as well as by inspiration. Go to the 28th chapter of Matthew, read and reflect, and you will see, first, that humility is a requisite ingredient. There offenses are pointed out, with a woe pronounced upon the perpetrator. If he trespass against you, go to him, not to another. If he will not hear you, take one or two more, only enough to give the church sufficient evidence, carefully avoiding to give the matter unnecessary publicity. If he neglect to hear them, tell it to the church, and remember, brethren, that there is where the case should meet its last, its final destiny. Though it be a right hand, a foot, an eye, cut off or pluck out rather than let the whole body perish. Don't suffer the matter to be taken up to any other tribunal on earth; the vigilant eye of the good Shepherd has left no opening in the pale of the church leading that way, and any member or members that will not bow to the laws of Zion, instead of being permitted to carry their case up, as some may suppose, to another professed ecclesiastical body, should be cast down from the judgment seat and out of the hallowed pale of the church; for that is the only way of egress from the sanctuary that the King has ordained, when offenders and offenses cannot be adjusted inside. But suppose a church becomes affected, then what? Take it to a court of appeals, an organism composed of parts of churches, to deal with churches as churches do with individual members? No, my dear brethren, never, never let it be said that the church of Christ, furnished as she is with a perfect set of laws and rules, which properly executed and applied, will adjust every difficulty that is properly brought before them - we say, never let it be said that she will suffer matters that her sovereign King has placed under or consigned exclusively to her jurisdiction, to go before a tribunal having no right to touch them besides what it has received from men. But even should a church become disaffected, we have a precedent on record to reach the case, in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. A church was

planted at Antioch, and a discrepancy was found there which created a difficulty that caused "no small dissension and disputation," and as there did not happen to be an association of delegates from churches, organized in the days of the apostles, that church sent Paul and Barnabas, with others, to another church at Jerusalem. The matter was investigated in the light of revelation and adjusted satisfactorily. Thus we have a scriptural example for the reciprocal action of churches in the management of grievances, and one that proved successful not only in that case, but in a number of others in which your humble servant has participated. I have known a number of instances where the united action of churches in the management of difficulties has been followed with the best of circumstances. But, such results, proceeding from the action of associations, have been "few and far between," (so far as my observation has extended) to say the least I can of them. They have generally been more fortunate (?) in giving them more wide-spread notoriety and influence, by flinging them abroad like burning firebrands, blighting every bud of peace that may have made its appearance, and effecting the most extensive divisions that have been known in the land. A difficulty originates in a church, the delegates take it to the association, and that body disseminates it to the different churches belonging to the association. The delegates from other associations take it to theirs, and thence it goes down to all the churches belonging to them, where it works like leaven till all is in a state of fermentation. Now, if I should "put on my studying cap," and try a whole month, I do not think I could invent a plan that would be more antagonistical to the peace, quietude and unity of Zion, or better calculated to produce widespread havoc and accomplish extensive divisions. It is a well known fact that by misrepresentation and exaggeration, minor matters have acquired importance, force and efficiency in the accomplishment of their abominable work in proportion to their notoriety. Thus mole-hills have swollen to mountains, and rivulets to angry and fearful deluges. Dear brethren, permit me earnestly to entreat you for the sake of the peace of Zion, who is thus "scattered and peeled," to keep your differences at home, circumscribe them within the narrowest possible limit, for the wider they spread the worse they grow. The whole truth is, that associations have no right under heaven to touch or tamper with them. Let those who think they have prove it if they can. Don't suppose now, brethren, because I oppose the idea of associations meddling with offenses, that I object to holding annual, semi-annual or quarterly meetings when properly conducted. Let so many churches as are conveniently situated agree to hold an annual meeting for *worship*, and, if they choose, take alternately the expenses, send greetings, statistics and other information from each other if they wish, correspond with others if they see proper to do so; but if a matter of grievance comes up, say, "Brethren, the proper times and places to attend to these matters are on our church-meeting days and at our churches. This is a meeting appointed for worship simply, not for the litigation of offenses, for we have no authority to touch them." O that the churches would awake from their slumbering stupor, and assert their inalienable right to govern and control their internal matters according to the rules and

examples given them in the scriptures; and if there is nothing in their faith or order that should prevent, nothing more than that their associations do not correspond, come together in peace, love and amity, fraternize each other cordially, and labor together for the mutual comfort and instruction of all, and acquaint their creatures, the associations, that the watchwords of the churches are, "Touch not, hands of," &c., and if they will persist in usurping authority by reaching forth unhallowed hands to widen breaches and give extension to affairs that they should have no business with, if nothing else will prevent the withering consequences of their action in such cases, wipe them out of existence at once. I have been grieved to see churches going to those organizations like supplicants, asking letters of permission to leave one and join another. "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle." I wish it always understood, that I have no desire to see sound and orderly Baptists unite with or fraternize those will-worshipers or work-mongers who differ radically with us in faith and practice. As well might we attempt to mingle oil and water, and it is well known by those who are best acquainted with me that I have not shunned to use the sword according to the best of my feeble ability, to cut asunder such extraneous elements. But no discerning Old School Baptist who has traveled among the churches to any considerable extent can fail to have seen that there are numerous sound and orderly churches, as well as ministers, whose religious interchange has been cut off and the reciprocity of their fellowship destroyed, and for no other reason than that associations have dropped their correspondence.

In conclusion, I beseech you, my dear brethren and the churches everywhere, to lay aside the commandments and traditions of men - fling your prejudices to the winds (if you have any) and take up your Bibles, and endeavor by the ample rules therein given to adjust your seeming difficulties. O that the Lord would demolish the barriers, dissipate the dust and tear down the scare-crows that have been raised to bar asunder, bewilder and alarm his children - cause them to lift up their voices together, dwell together in unity, work together like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot, causing peace to flow like a river among us, with our hearts so cemented together with the bond of love as to defy all the artifices of the enemy to sever them.

Brethren, should we not all unite and endeavor to consummate so desirable an end? May the Lord direct and sustain us in every good word and work. Brethren, strive for the peace of Zion. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Your brother still in the best of bonds, and in much tribulation,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Isaiah 40:1, "Comfort Ye My People &c."

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." - Isaiah xl. 1.

The frequent applications of comfort to the people of God are most appropriately suited to their relief when that comfort is necessary, amid the multiplied trials, conflicts and tribulations to which they are incident while engaged in the incessant warfare to which they are exposed while journeying through this waste, howling wilderness. We say multiplied, because they are many, and are also various and perplexing, and call loudly for comfort.

"The world, the flesh and Satan, too,
Unite and strive what they can do;
On thee, O Lord, we humbly call,
Uphold us, or we soon must fall."

When we first realize the power, glory and joy-inspiring presence of our great Deliverer, we promise ourselves too much - more than he in his wisdom has allotted us, in our present belligerent state; hence we soon meet disappointments, and are consequently discouraged and cast down. Our troubles begin, and one follows another in such rapid succession that we are soon convinced that none but our infinitely wise and bountiful Benefactor can provide for our defense or supply our wants. But, blessed be his name, he is amply sufficient for every emergency. Then "let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." - Ps. cxxx. 7, 8. Appalling calamities now depress the spirits of the children of God, and fearful forebodings sadden their visages. Their social intercourse with each other is hindered to a great extent - their communications and correspondence as a body much interrupted, and should not all in their respective localities - all who have a word of comfort for the dejected sons and daughters of Zion in this afflictive dispensation of God's providence speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins; and therefore, that,

"Her warfare finished, stands,
From that illustrious day,
When Jesus hushed the law's demands,
And bore her sins away;"

and that now, "The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble; he sitteth between the cherubim; let the earth be moved. The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all the people."

O what a spectacle would this wicked world soon present did not the Lord God omnipotent reign. His dominion bounds the universe. He reigns in heaven above; he rules all over the earth beneath. Raging tempests, roaring billows, reigning monarchs, ruling magistrates and reckless men; with booming artillery and fierce flashing rifles, with all the other engines of death and carnage, can do no more than execute his immutable decrees; for he "worketh *all things* after the counsel of his own will."

"Chained to his throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With every angel's form and size,
Drawn by the eternal pen.

His providence unfolds the book,
And makes his counsels shine;
Each opening leaf, and every stroke,
Fulfills some deep design."

The monstrous orbs that glide through the pathway of the heavens, the fierce blazing lightning that cleaves the sky, the bellowing thunder that causes the universe to tremble; with all the birds that float through the air, all the beasts that roam over the desert, all the fish that cleave the waters; with all things both great and small that be, or exist, in air, earth or sea, are directly, immediately and forever under his sovereign control and guidance; and one has truly said, "If providence should be taken by surprise by the casual impinging of an accident, one fortuitous grain might dislocate the banded universe. The smallest seeming trifle is ordered as the morning light, and he that rideth on the hurricane is pilot to the bubble on the breaker. O, my Father's children, when we can by the eye of faith look beyond the dark drama, the gloomy picture that is drawn around us, to the majestic throne of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, our only but all-sufficient hope in time of trouble, anchored securely and forever within the veil where Jesus hath entered for us, assured at the same time by his unfailing word that he works all things together for our good, should not the exhilarating sight calm our disquietude, settle and soothe our laboring spirits, and give us "the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?"

"In every condition, in sickness and health,
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As the days may demand, shall my strength ever be."

In the light of revelation we scrutinize our poor, weak, sinful and insignificant selves, and, so far as our own worthiness or merit is concerned, might readily conclude that we were overlooked, neglected, forgotten, or spurned from the presence of the majesty of the heavens. But, instead of that, what amazing condescension, matchless grace, unbounded love and heart-soothing mercy! Has he deigned to teach us by his Spirit and in his word that we are the purchase of his blood, the objects of his love and the subjects of his grace? Then may we rest assured that he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, will with him freely give us all things necessary for our support, defense, and comfort. Instead, therefore, of overlooking or neglecting us, he numbers the very hairs of our heads and keeps us as the apple of his eye.

With a constant and unceasing vigilance he watches over us by day and night.

"Within his circling power we stand,
On every side we find his hand,
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
We are surrounded still with God."

What would be our sad destiny should he withdraw his loving kindness and tender mercy from us for a moment? What a wonderful contrast between the watchful and unceasing care of our kind Shepherd and our own negligence of ourselves and our heedless inconstancy! Changing as the fleeting cloud, evanescent as the morning dew, how soon should we pass away and be no more were he to leave us! While his eye is over us and his ear open to our cries, with a ceaseless vigilance he watches all things around us, and though fears may alarm and dangers on every side seem to threaten us,

"Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit."

"Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely," therefore,

"While he affords his aid,
I cannot yield to fear,
Though I should walk through death's dark shade,
My Shepherd's with me there."

Dear brethren, let us not be discouraged while the sacred record glows with so many assurances of his divine power to protect, his exhaustless fullness to supply us with every needful blessing either for time or eternity. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that one of his little ones should perish, but it is his will that every one of them should have everlasting life; and most assuredly his will must be done; "his counsel *shall* stand and he

will do all his pleasure." Let us not complain of our momentary trials, but esteem it a signal honor to know "the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death," and "rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy;" for "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." With what composure should we sit and wonder, and then adore, extol and reverence his holy name, while we see him seated on his throne of eternal dominion and glory, with

"Divine compassion in his eyes,
And pardon in his hands,"

while all, over us, under us and around us are so completely subjected to his sovereign control that even "the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." And to think, that while thus enthroned in regal dignity he has made his throne of grace accessible to us poor sinners! O, my friends, let us in all our tribulations repair to that merciful throne, the only place where we can "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need;" and let each one in humble supplication exclaim, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." Can we be silent when it is said by the psalmist, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power."

What signifies the light, transient or momentary afflictions that we have to encounter here? Should we not rather glory in tribulations; "knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Then, brethren, let patience have her perfect work; "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." And again, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" but it is "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The things that are seen by our mortal eyes are time things, and time is a destroyer. The impress of his withering touch is stamped upon all his works. Death is his constant companion, and death is a leveler. From our cradle to our grave the blighting signs of time are visible upon us, while the seeds of death, certain to mature, are implanted within us. We grow up like the grass, and seem for a moment to flourish like the green herb. Soon we are shaken by the tempests, battered by storms and scorched beneath the bleaching and withering sunbeams of time, the destroyer. Presently, "The keepers of the house shall tremble and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease, because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the

grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; and when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets; or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the wheel broken at the cistern; then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity."- Eccl. xii. 3-8.

Thus onward moves the leveler, with steady but resistless tread; his chilling hand touches the feeble tenement, we vanish away and are numbered with the past. How true the words of the poet:

"In vain the wealthy mortals toil,
And heap their shining dust in vain,
Look down and scorn the humble poor,
And boast their lofty hills of gain.

Thence they are huddled to the grave,
Where kings and slaves have equal thrones,
Their bones without distinction lie,
Among the heap of meaner bones."

Perhaps it is meet, my brethren and sisters, that we gaze for a while on the dark portrait that is drawn upon this gloomy valley. It is a humiliating picture, and humility becomes us. But dwell not too long upon the sad scene. "Then look up, for your redemption draweth nigh." Remember that time, though a destroyer, can destroy nothing that is really and intrinsically good. Its devastation is confined to what is evil or wrong.

"All of the past is living still,
All that is good and true;
The rest is perished, and it did,
Deserve to perish, too."

And death, though a leveler, is but a borrower, or menial of our Lord and Master, and can hold our frail bodies in his cold embrace but a little while, and then must deliver them up. Time and death are but the servants of our great Deliverer. He appointed the times and determined the bounds of their habitation.

"Sovereign Ruler of the skies,
Ever gracious, ever wise,

All my times are in thy hand,
All events at thy command."

A substantial comfort to us is the fact that all with which we have to do is to all intents and purposes under the reigning power and righteous rule of our God and Savior; and that in the rich fullness of his grace he holds an antidote for every poison, a reviving cordial for every malady with which sin or Satan can afflict us, although the monster has set up a counterplot or opposite to all the blessings we receive. The enemy lurks in the flesh (fleshly mind,) and therefore it lusts against the spirit (spiritual mind,) and this causes us many and sore conflicts. This dear Deliverer and that subtle enemy are belligerent parties, complete antipodes, and never can come to a peaceable compromise. This infuses love and goodwill wherever it operates; that hatred and ill will. This joy and gladness; that sorrow and grief. This peace and quietude; that war and strife. In short, it is an incessant struggle between right and wrong, and thus the war goes on throughout our mortal pilgrimage, subjecting us to much tribulation, causing us to,

"See every day new straits attend,
And wonder where the scene will end,"

until the mighty angel shall set one foot upon the sea and the other upon the land, and swear by him that lives forever and ever that there shall be time no longer; when death and hell shall deliver up their dead, Satan and sin be visibly and forever vanquished.

O, what amazing scenes of rapture and hallowed admiration will we then and there behold! Each one may confidently anticipate a glorious resurrection of this mortal body that is sown in corruption, dishonor, weakness and natural; but will be raised in incorruption, glory, power and spiritual; fully prepared to dwell with Christ forever.

"Now redemption, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear;
All his people, once rejected,
Now shall meet him in the air."

But, brethren, for that we must patiently wait, and the struggle will soon be over. Here a dark veil interposes that hides from us the bright glories of that celestial day; here only now and then a celestial ray penetrates the gloomy prison; but there no sable veil or dimming cloud shall ever mar the lustre of that eternal day. No counterplot shall enter there to cool the ardor of love, diminish the fullness of joy, or disturb the work of peace and quietude forever.

"O, what amazing joys they feel,

While to their golden harps they sing,
And sit on every heavenly hill,
And spread the triumphs of their King."

Brother Beebe, I fear I am of late taxing your columns too heavily; if so, throw this aside.

Your brother, in hope of a brighter day.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Legally Appointed Thanksgiving Days, &c.

Georgetown, Ky., November 28, 1861.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I believe that today has been set apart by twelve or fifteen of the Governors of this Government as a day of thanksgiving and prayer. I desire not to indulge myself in an unbecoming censoriousness or an unjustifiable fault-finding disposition in relation to the appointments and exercises of the day, but one thing is certain, and that is, that "the preparations of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord;" and another thing is equally certain, which is, that where that preparation is lacking the requisitions of the civil magistracy will never supply the deficiency. And, as it is impossible to please God without that faith, which is his gift and a fruit of the Spirit, all the outward forms and words of the professed worship of God, in the absence of that gift, is but solemn mockery, a delusive counterfeit; and however well that counterfeit may be executed, it is none the better, unless that it is better calculated to deceive the simple. When the time drew near for the commencement of the appointed service in our town it was made musical with the chiming of bells, twirling notes of the fife and the rambling roll of the drum in annunciation of the occasion. I had learned in the morning that a sermon was to be delivered at the Methodist Church to the "Home Guards," a military company in this place; and soon the martial procession was seen wending its way to the place of worship, with fife playing, drum beating, banner flying and muskets shouldered, with bristling bayonets "pointing heavenward." Inside, a majestically imposing looking "Rev. Gentleman," with sanctified appearance, occupied the "sacred desk;" and the soldiers, after placing the flagstaff beside the sanctum, clad in martial uniform, took their seats on his right hand and on his left hand. The well arranged "prayer" of the operator, as well as his lecture during the service, would seem to prove to

all competent judges that he was one of the "wise and prudent" ones of the earth. While he was addressing the "solemn audience" one of the militant officials walked along the aisle with sword upon his thigh, as though he "went forth conquering and to conquer." I felt solemn while gazing upon the wild contrast before me. There stood the professed minister of the mild, gentle Lamb of God, with the sacred oracles that proclaim "peace on earth and good will toward men" before his eyes. On his right hand and on his left were arrayed the representations of war on earth and ill will toward men, and that ill will so exasperated as to call to its aid the deadliest weapons to do the dreadful work of carnage. Recorded upon that hallowed register is found the language of the Prince of Peace, "I came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." On either side of the minister the representation would seem to suggest, "We come not to save men's lives, but to destroy them!" In the centre it is said, Put up thy sword; they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. On either side it is exhibited, Draw out the sword; we that take the sword must cause others to perish with the sword. There it is written, "Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds." On either side it is portrayed, Our weapons are carnal, but mighty through men to the building of strong-holds. There it is said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." On the right and on the left the signs would say, Hate your enemies, curse and destroy them that offend you, do evil and deal destruction to them that hate you, and instead of praying for them that despitefully use you, give them the contents of your muskets, the points of the daggers on their muzzles and bathe your swords in their blood. Thus we might pursue the contrast almost *ad infinitum*, for there in a professed house of worship was the Bible, representing Christ with the messages of life, peace and joy; and there, too, in the same house, were specimens of this sin-stricken world with the missiles of death, war and mourning. But let this suffice for the contrast for the present. The reader is not to suppose that the writer of this article would intimate that men should under no circumstances take up arms for the defense of their lawful rights, or that he would by any means deprive those who bear arms from attending to and enjoying their religious privileges. But why all this hostile array while professing to worship the God of Peace? Why those instruments of cruelty where the God of mercy should be adored, as though it was necessary to mingle human blood with the sacrifices? But I am glad that it was not an Old School Baptist demonstration. The church of Christ has no use for the weapons of death in their houses when she approaches the throne of grace. She hopes there to obtain mercy and find grace (not muskets and swords,) to help in time of need.

Dear brethren, let us not wait for an annual requisition of civil magistrates to call out our thanksgiving and prayers to the God of providence and grace once in three hundred and sixty-five days! Every day should be a day of thanksgiving and prayer with those who are born of God, who know our Lord and Savior, whom to know is life eternal. No day is a day of acceptable thanksgiving and prayer with those who know him not, though

called to the formal observance of it by the Governor or President. Surely, my brethren, we are bound to give thanks always to God for mercies extended to us, blessings received and privileges enjoyed; and most assuredly it is our happy privilege to pray without ceasing for the perpetuation of those mercies, blessings and immunities. We should remember, too, that we are dependent upon the Lord for the true spirit of prayer; and also that we are often led by our carnal nature to ask, and receive not, because we ask amiss; and that it is often the case with us that we know not how to pray as we ought, but should rejoice that the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and that, too, according to the will of God. But, further, while we appreciate the privilege and are sensible that this is a time that should call us to the throne of grace to pour out our thanks and prayers to the Lord for his favors, we should recollect, too, that it is a day of deep humiliation; that our sins have brought upon us the sore evils under which we mourn, the sad desolations that meet our eyes, and the reports of which cause our ears to tingle. Should not this consideration humble us before God and urge us to deep and hearty repentance in dust and ashes? My dear brethren, are we thus repenting for our sins? Can we? If not, let us humbly call upon the Lord to give us hearts of repentance. But, above all, let us endeavor to forsake our sins, for it may be that we are all more or less guilty. Let us strictly scrutinize our every word and every act. Have we said any word, done any deed to engender the strife, and bring about the desolations that afflict us? Let us speak and act thus no more. Shall we, can we bear to add fuel to the flames that are so terribly consuming all our earthly enjoyments? How appalling the scenes that surround us! The son stands ready to hurl the shaft of death at his father, his brother, and even at his own son. The dearest ties of consanguinity are relentlessly torn away, and fraternity, in many instances, has yielded the empire of the heart to an unnatural malignity. Who can look upon the heart-rending scenes that surround us without feeling some of the emotions of the prophet Jeremiah when he plaintively cried out, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

O, my brethren, while we mourn for the dissolution of those natural ties that bind father to son, son to father, and brother to brother, let us give thanks unto the Father of mercies that he has united the saints to each other and to him in more enduring bonds. But, alas! were it possible for our carnal nature to sever and destroy them, they too would soon give way. We have seen them tried, racked and wrenched to the utmost tension to which carnal nature could expose them. Have not some of us been made to forbear and strive and pray that their perpetuity might be preserved when our brother has seemed determined to destroy them? The fleshly passions appear at times to insinuate themselves between the affections that should bind us together until they become so callous that we are almost insensible of their force. But, thanks to the Lord, where those heavenly bonds have once existed, though smothered for a time by the fogs and mists of passion that conceal and render them dormant, their Author will revive them, and we shall feel all

their force renewed and increased, if not in this weary wilderness of sin, in that brighter, higher, holier, happier clime.

"There bound by those eternal ties,
Indissolubly strong,
We all shall see the top-stone rise,
And grace shall crown the song.

No more the dreadful tyrant's art,
The flesh shall vex no more;
Pure love and peace shall bind each heart,
In bonds forever sure."

The works of discord, contention and confusion are conjoined with and constitute a part of our carnal nature. May we then, dear brethren, be prepared to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and "live to him who died for us and rose again." Let each one of us endeavor not to mar the work of peace or hinder the exercise of love. We look around us, and see with heart-felt grief that the sweet angel of peace has spread her wings and flown from our once happy and prosperous, but now distracted and afflicted country. Shall she be driven, too, from the abodes of the saints? O God, forbid. What a sad scene must inevitably follow her exit! May we endeavor brethren, to cultivate and court her stay in our midst. Shall the church of God, around which clings our last lingering hope of peace on earth and good will towards men, strive to urge from her embrace the heaven-given messenger, to mourn over the loss and repent in sable sackcloth and ashes? No, never, never! While Jesus, the author of peace and love, lives, as a few gleaned grapes and berries were to be left in the former vine and olive, (Isa. xvii. 6) so shall a residue of the fruits of the Spirit be left with the few that find the strait gate and the narrow way. If the ties of flesh and blood relationship must be snapped asunder, if our enemies are to be those of our own household, may we not disturb the work of brotherly love. A precious sister lately, when nearing the portals of her final rest, observed to a brother, "I wish that brotherly love could continue more." When her earthly career was fast hastening to a close, when she had but little more to see, or know, or wish for beneath the sun, and when she was about to enter into the plenitude of its enjoyment in a happier sphere, she forgot not her relatives in Jesus here below, but sent up one of her last petitions for the perpetuity of brotherly love. O, that blessed principle, brotherly love! We too, like her, must soon leave these mortal shores. Our earthly preferences and perplexities must soon be laid aside. What then, will be their value when compared with that eternally enduring principle of brotherly love? If no earthly ties or earthly interests are sufficient to bind us together, let us cling to our dear brethren and sisters in the Lord. May we enfold and hold them in the arms of our christian affections with an undying embrace, until it shall please

our God and Father to gather us to our blissful home in one bundle of eternal life, love and peace, where we shall realize all the force of that eternal bond of union, where the lovely cords shall never more be tried by the torturing touch of our depraved nature or by time's blighting influences, but where peace shall flow like a river, love abound as a wide-spread ocean, and joyful songs of harmony and concord regale the saints in ultimate glory forever and forever.

That grace, mercy, love and peace may abound in the household of faith is the sincere desire of your brother in the midst of trials,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Romans 5:14.

Georgetown, Ky., Jan. 1, 1862.

"Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."
Rom. v. 14.

BROTHER BEEBE: - By the request of a highly esteemed brother I hereby submit the following remarks on the foregoing text of scripture for publication in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, provided you deem it expedient to publish them.

In this fifth chapter to the Romans the apostle exhibits two respective heads of families, and though different in many respects, one is *the figure* of the other; and as they differ in so many particulars, he may be considered a figure by way of contrast. Each one is called ADAM in the scriptures. One is denominated the *first Adam*, the other the *second Adam*. The first is not so called because of priority of existence, but because he was first developed here; for the second was before all things, and by him all things consist. Our text brings to view in the first place one of the consequences of the act of the first Adam. In the twelfth verse it is said, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The little adverb *so* shows *how* death passed upon all men. How was it? Why, *by one man* sin entered into the world, and as death is the effect or consequence of sin, *so*, just that way, death passed upon all men. The thirteenth verse reads, "For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law." Sin could not be in the absence of law, for, "where no law is, there is no transgression." "Nevertheless, death reigned from

Adam to Moses." Now, death could not reign in the absence of sin, because it is the effect of sin, and no effect can occur without a cause to produce it; and sin, the cause of death, could not exist in the absence of law; (as sin is the transgression of the law.) Hence, it is evident that the law given to Adam stood in all its force from him to Moses; and therefore, it is equally clear that this one man's transgression or sin, from that very circumstance, fell like a death-pall upon all his unborn progeny then and there embodied in him, and so death reigned from Adam to Moses when the law was more fully proclaimed and its justice and terror more gloriously displayed amid the flaming lightning, rumbling thunder, lowering smoke, and convulsive quaking of Mount Sinai. "When lust is conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death;" and thus death reigned from Adam to Moses.

"Even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Theologians differ on this portion of the text; and of course I must differ with some; and I know not but that my views are peculiar to myself, or nearly so, and hope they will be strictly compared with the standard of truth. Some contend that the expression alludes exclusively to infants, that they are those who did not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression. That infants are included in the number is readily admitted; but that no others are included I cannot concede for a moment. The question is, who ever did, since Adam, sin after the similitude of his transgression? By taking a scriptural view of the subject, I think it will appear evident that *none* since him have ever sinned after that similitude. Let us look at his case. There he stood before his Creator in all that primeval state of uprightness in which he came from the hand of his Maker, who pronounced him "very good." While occupying that exalted state of innocence, a law, high and holy as he, was given him, securing to him innumerable blessings and privileges while loyal, with but one prohibitory clause, by the violation of which he hurled himself with all the myriads of his unborn lineage in him, down from that state of innocency into the dismal vortex of sin and death. That act was the forfeiture of his life, and of the life of all his posterity in him, for it was previously said to him, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Death signifies a separation, and this separation was Adam's death. He did not die a spiritual death, as some say; this could not be, because he "was not spiritual, but natural." His death, then, consisted in his separation from God in that day when he partook of the forbidden evil. He is driven out of Eden to wander in transgression and sin, or in other words, "Dead in trespasses and sins;" and as it is an item in the law of God that the soul that sinneth shall die, we soon hear the annunciation of his Creator in the awful sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." His transgression then consisted in stepping out of a state of complete uprightness into one of sin and depravity, by violating the plain prohibitory clause of the law of his God, bringing upon himself and all his then fallen family death with all its woes. None since him have ever stood in that exalted position; none could thus fall when all were already

down, and therefore none could sin after the similitude of his transgression, and the inevitable consequence was death reigned from Adam to Moses over them all.

The reign of death between Adam and Moses was conspicuously displayed "when God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;" and therefore "bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly," exhibiting but a part of the sad and awful picture of the dominion of death in its reign from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, or, in other words, over them all.

"Who is the figure of him that was to come." This figure next claims our attention, and it has been so frequently discussed through the press, in the pulpit, and in social circles, demonstrated by intellectual abilities so far superior to mine, that it will not be expected that I can reflect any new light on the subject. One prominent feature in the figure is, that he was the head and embodiment of all his natural family, as the substance is the head and embodiment of all his spiritual family. They are both frequently spoken of, too, by many, as *representatives*. Indeed, the expression "head and representative" is so often used that I know not but it may be called a "hackneyed" phrase. Now, that Adam and Christ were the heads, and each the embodiment of his offspring, is, in the light of scripture, as clear as a sunbeam; but that either, (as the term is used and understood by many,) is a representative, is to my weak capacity about as clear as mud. I believe that neither is thus denominated in the scriptures. I have heard it argued that we were not to suppose that Adam's family *really* existed in him, that our standing there was only a representative one. Convince me that *that* is a fact, and then I will be an advocate for infantile purity. Adam was placed under a law, and I cannot conceive how his violation of that law as an individual representative could criminate any but himself. Can our representative in Congress or the State Legislature criminate us by an unlawful act? Suppose he perjures himself in taking his oath of office, does that perjure us? By no means. So with Adam; had he been but a representative, his violation of the law could not have involved all his progeny in guilt, nor could David have said with propriety, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" nor that, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." The fact is that we all as really sinned in Adam, having our life-existence in, and being the component parts of him, as did Levi pay tithes in Abraham, being in his loins when Melchisedec met him. As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Thus the figure stands; we were in and one with Adam, and therefore his sin is ours; we were in and one with Christ, and therefore his righteousness is ours. But again, dispersed as we are over the face of the earth, we are still in Adam - are but Adam multiplied. For, "in the likeness of God made he him, male and female created he them, and called *their* name Adam, in the day when they were created." Hence it is, that our natural life is still in Adam - our sin is in Adam, and in Adam all (his posterity) die. And so with the substance: In Christ we have our

spiritual life, our righteousness is in him, and, "in Christ shall all be made alive." But, although there are striking similitude's in the figure and substance, there is a vast contrast between them. By one fell act, Adam the first entailed upon all his children all the curses and misery that flesh is heir to, involved them deeply in debt with nothing to pay, reduced them to the most degraded state of abject slavery, incarcerated them in a doleful prison-house, and bound them there with the manacles of sin to groan and writhe and wail beneath the intolerable burden, remediless, helpless, hopeless.

By the glorious deeds of the second Adam he entailed upon all his children all the spiritual blessings and heart-soothing joy of an eternal and incorruptible inheritance, he removed the dreadful curse, by being made a curse for them – canceled their enormous debt, he breaks the yoke of bondage and snaps asunder the fetters of sin that bind them in the dungeon of death, and lets them go free; then binds up the broken-hearted, proclaims liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and announces the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.

By the disobedience of the first Adam all his children are lost in the desert, goaded by thorns and pierced by the thistles while entangled in a waste howling wilderness, exposed to roaring winds and raging tempests, in a parched ground and a thirsty land, scorched beneath the burning sunbeams, without a shelter or a shade.

By the obedience of the second Adam the lost is found and saved, the wilderness and solitary place is made glad, the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose, the parched ground becomes a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; and this man becomes a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land to shelter them from the weltering sunbeams, and the boisterous tempests.

Following in the wake of the first are the degraded fruits of "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings." &c. Ranged along the pathway of the second are the dulcified fruit of "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, faith, temperance; against such there is no law." The first sinks his children into a horrible pit and miry clay, where all is toil and misery, and such toil as sinks them deeper and deeper into the sickening quag, and where not even a requiem is heard to indicate the smallest respite. The second takes his children up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, sets their feet on a rock, establishes their goings, and puts in their mouth new anthems of joy and songs of praise to their great Deliverer. We accompany the first to the threshold of desolation, who opens wide the gate that leads to destruction, launches us into the dreary regions and environs us with the walls of desolation. Borne by the second we are carried to the gates of the paradise of God, the everlasting doors are uplifted, and the King of glory enters with his heavenly train into the celestial mansions; he environs us there with the palisades of safety, the walls of

everlasting salvation. In the regions of the first stalks the gaunt ghost famine, or flung into the air are the pestilential vapors, or walking in our midst is the cruel god of war. In the presence of the second is a blissful abode; no famine is there, for the undiminished plenitude of boundless grace perpetuates a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined. No pestilential vapors shall ever pollute that salubrious climate. "And the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick."

"No chilling winds or poisonous breath,
Shall reach that healthful shore;
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more."

The angry clouds of war shall never lower over to darken the lucid plains, but the bright sheen of eternal glory emanating from the SUN of Righteousness will forever illuminate the Lamb-like myriads, and bless them there with the smiles of perpetual peace.

Thus hath God displayed the glory of his justice in the condemnation, and that "by one man's disobedience," of all his children; and the riches of his grace "by the obedience of one" in the free justification of all his children; and the sum of the whole is, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Yours, as ever,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Zechariah 4:2,3.

Georgetown, Ky., March 11, 1862.

"I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof; and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." Zech. iv. 2, 3.

BROTHER BEEBE: - While engaged in conversation recently on the subject contained in the connection of scripture heading this article, I was earnestly requested by

an esteemed and much respected brother to give my views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES upon it, in connection with a part of the eleventh chapter of Revelation, particularly respecting the "two witnesses." I approach the subject with a degree of diffidence, as there has been much published heretofore in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on the same subject, and by brethren whose abilities in the views they have given I cannot doubt for a moment. I hope they will accord to me the same honesty in my views on the text referred to, should I differ with them in some particulars. It is not for the purpose of controverting the opinions of my highly esteemed brethren, who have heretofore written on the same subject, that I write, but merely to "shew mine opinion," for I have not so much as reviewed their comments since first reading them. I feel confident that none of us desire that our views should be endorsed unless they harmonize with the inspired record.

The language contained in the text is evidently emblematical, and calculated to typify something more momentous than the several things named therein. That being the case, there must be a striking analogy of the things named, and those intended to be demonstrated thereby. Shall we consider those things in the order in which they are recorded in the text, with their analogy to those which I think they allude? The first named is: "A candlestick all of gold." That the candlestick is an emblem of the church I suppose will be doubted by few, if any. - See Rev. i. 20, and many other passages. The analogy is certainly good. It is all gold, [*of* being a supplied word] and therefore completely purified. Christ gave himself for the church, that he might "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," and by one offering perfected her forever, his blood cleansing her from all sin. And then, the candlestick has not the light it shows within itself, but only exhibits what is placed in it, as the church only portrays the light that she received from Christ. This candlestick is represented as having, "A bowl upon the top of it." The bowl is doubtless to be understood as a reservoir for the oil, to furnish the light exhibited by the candlestick; and I think the similitude a good one, if we consider it as typifying Christ, the great repository of all grace and glory, the complete embodiment of the "Father of lights," and therefore "the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and from whom has emanated every lucid ray that has in any age illumined the church. This bowl is said to be upon the top of the candlestick, representing Christ as the Head of the church, or as set upon his holy hill of Zion, immediately and forever connected with and united to her; so that, as the oil descends from the bowl into the candlestick, furnishing it with the necessary essence of light, in like manner from Jesus, the Head of the church, "the fullness of him that filleth all in all." And as it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in him, his essential fullness descends in his church, filling her "with all the fullness of God," irradiating her so completely that she is made to appear like a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid, whose glory may be seen afar off, and many shall come to the brightness of her rising. Truly, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."

"And his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps which were upon the top thereof." It is evidently to be understood that the light emitted from these lamps is nothing more nor less than the flaming oil contained in and flowing from the bowls. The oil, therefore, is the light. It is thought by many that this oil is illustrative of the grace of God. I think, however, that it more appropriately represents the *life* of the church which is in Christ; and that, as the oil is the light, so the life of Christ is the light of his church. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Hence it is said to the church, "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." Isa. lx. 19. The lamps agree in number with the pipes attached to them. We would conclude then, that the pipes are so many tubes or ducts through which the oil is communicated to the lamps at their terminus, where the light irradiates and diffuses its brilliancy to all that have eyes to see. The number of the pipes is seven. As that number in the scriptures generally brings to view a full, complete, round or whole number, I conclude that these pipes figuratively represent the whole number of Christ's ministers, whether in the prophetic or gospel dispensation. Is not the analogy good? The ministry in any age have been as inadequate to produce light without it being first received from Christ, as would be the pipes to afford oil unless supplied and filled from the bowls. I think the same characters are alluded to in the type of "the seven stars," as seen by John, and spoken of in Rev. i. 16-20, in the right hand of the Alpha and Omega. How appropriate the figure, how soon would the light be extinguished should the oil cease to flow through the pipes! It is entirely necessary that the pipes should be completely emptied of everything but oil. Should a clog of clay fill up the vacuum of the tube, the light would be immediately dimmed, and all be dark. No confidence is to be put in the flesh. It may have passed the ordeal of the Theological Institute, still it will afford no light.

"And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." In Rev. xi. 3, 4, it is said, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand, two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth." The difference in the two quotations is, that John was told of two candlesticks, while Zechariah saw but one. John being shown (as I suppose) the church composed of Jews and Gentiles, separately considered, the former containing "an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel," and the latter, "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues;" while Zechariah prophetically saw her with the middle wall of partition broken down, and the twain making one. Both, however, recognize two witnesses, and these two olive trees or witnesses we have next to consider.

The use of witnesses is to procure or establish facts, and there is no doubt that the Lord has left for his church tangible witnesses, by which may be proved every necessary fact pertaining to him or his kingdom. I consider, then, that the two olive trees are emblems of the oracles of God, as contained in the Old and New Testaments. Christ,

when he came to do his Father's will, execute his decrees, and fulfill his eternal purposes and designs in the salvation of his people, stood connected with his church, at the end of the former and commencement of the latter dispensation. This appears to me to be a beautiful and sublime figurative illustration, which my poor language I fear will fail to delineate intelligibly to my brethren. Imagine a pure golden candlestick with a bowl of pure exhaustless oil upon the top of it, and they so united that the oil is ever descending to supply the necessary light. United with the bowl and candlestick, as they are united, are those several pipes conducting the oil to as many lamps, which throw out a sufficient brilliancy for all necessary purposes. Now consider two important records spread, one on either side of the bowl, consisting of two bodies of testimony of vital interest to the household. Let the lamps be trimmed, the light burning, and then turn to the record. There it is testified, "It (the woman's seed,) shall bruise thy (the serpent's,) head." Turn over a leaf, and there is seen, "The firstlings of the flock," in the hands of Abel; and as we progress, see Noah with his ark, wherein few were saved from the deluge, Abraham wending his way with Isaac to Mount Moriah, the ram caught in the thicket by the horns, and see Isaac setting out to salute, take and decorate his bride, Jacob undergoing a rigorous servitude for his. In process of time a grievous famine is sent over the land - Jacob and his family must go down to Egypt; but God has, through the treachery of his brethren, sent a Joseph there to provide for his father's house, but there they are brought into bondage, and evil entreated four hundred years. In due time Moses is seen there with a wondrous rod, and Aaron with his flippant tongue, and finally Pharaoh and his cohorts are made to quail before the servants of the Most High, the people of Israel are let go, after the significant emblem of the lamb of the Passover, and its blood upon the lintels and door-posts. A lane is thrown open in the Red Sea, the waters stand as walls while they pass through, which the Egyptians, assaying to do were drowned. Aaron and Levi are testifying yonder with their priestly habiliments, the bleeding birds, the bleating lambs, the bellowing bullocks, and all the incense that smoked upon the Hebrew altars, each penetrating by the lucid rays of the burning lamps the dark and distant future, and by which were seen and testified the coming of the Son of God! Look at the pillar of cloud and fire as a screen and directory! The rock smitten in Horeb, the waters gushing out to cool the thirst of Israel! See the manna raining from heaven, the flocks of quails coming as clouds for their food, their raiment that waxed not old in forty years travel! And there we behold an unbroken chain of testimony, proving in advance the approach of the Protector, Provider, Sustainer and Deliverer of Israel!

Hark! what notes of thrilling symphony are those we hear rolling from the illumined record? There is Miriam and her companions with their timbrels, David with his harp, his psaltery, his cymbal, his dulcimer, and his instrument of ten strings, Isaiah is singing of a vineyard of red wine, of him that waters it every moment, who keeps it night and day, lest any should hurt it! Solomon is chanting of his well beloved and spouse, attuning the passing away of the winter and the coming of spring! All the watchmen join the concert,

they lift up the voice, with the voice together they sing. Some have been brought through, and have seen the horse and rider that pursued them swallowed up in the obedient waters; others have been delivered from blood-thirsty men, voracious beasts, the burning furnace, and many from an horrible pit and miry clay. All form one harmonious orchestra, and carol in living testimonial strains the high praises of their wonder-working Deliverer.

Much more might be said of the olive tree, or body of evidence on yonder side of the bowl, for it has many branches, but forms one tree, or many particles, but making one dense cloud of witness, standing by the Lord of the whole earth, as witnessed by the law and the prophets; for to him gave all the prophets witness, when the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, testified beforehand his sufferings, and the glory that should follow. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Shall we now look over on this side, and examine the other record in the light produced by the same oil? On the very first page, after a faithful genealogy of Jesus, we see it written, "He shall save his people from their sins." Compare with Isaiah xlv. 17, and we see in the outset the complete concordance of the two witnesses. The same perfect agreement will be manifest if we survey the tree on this side from the root to the very extreme branches. Immediately following the annunciation of his humble birth and birthplace by an angel sent from God, an orchestra of heavenly songsters hail his advent; the heavens are made musical, they are caroling his high praises, chanting anthems of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will toward men." Compare with Isa. ix. 6, &c. Onward from his birth the testimony progresses, so completely corresponsive with that on the other side, that it shows it to be unmistakably a tree of the same growth. The very place of his birth, identical with the predictions of the prophets, his exit to Egypt and call therefrom, together with many other incidents of his early life, proclaim in true telling accents that he is the true Immanuel or God with us. The Baptist harbinger, long ere his birth the subject of prophetic lore, fills up his mission in preparing his way before him, and bearing a faithful and corroborative testimony that he is the Son of God, the Christ that was to come. When he had immersed him in the river Jordan, to bind up the testimony of his Messiahship, the Spirit of God descended like a dove, lighting upon him, and a voice from his Father in heaven proclaims him his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. An important part of this body of evidence is the record of his own infallible words, corroborated and established by his mighty deeds. His words affirm that he came from heaven to do his Father's will, and that will is, that every one that his Father had given him should be raised up at the last day. By his deeds the eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf are unstopped, the lame man leaps as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sings. Paralysis, mania, leprosy, fluxes, fevers, and many other diseases otherwise incurable, fled at the healing touch of his hand, and the dead were reanimated by the power of his voice. The high surging billows were leveled to a plain by his word, the bellowing tempest hushed to a calm at his bidding, and devils fled aghast at his mandate. The inspiration of his apostles, the miracles he empowered them to perform in his name,

and the testimony they bore under the influence of that inspiration, all conspire to make up the body of evidence.

Among the last but not the least of the wonderful works performed by him while here on his great mission of salvation was the reproachful death he endured to redeem his children from condemnation and rising from the dead for their justification. In triumph he ascends on high, leading captivity captive, enters into heaven itself the advocate of his people, sends them the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, opens their understanding to understand the scriptures, and myriads of them read the testimony with a hallow of joy. It does appear to me that the Savior has decided the matter as to one of these witnesses, at least, saying in Matthew xxiv. 14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world FOR A WITNESS to all nations," &c. Thus, while the former record compasses us about as a cloud well filled with rain, the latter must eventually bear a faithful testimony to all nations, and then shall the end come, when we shall no longer need those witnesses. It is said in Revelation xi. 6, "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will." It must be remembered that Jesus has "all power in heaven and in earth," and therefore that these witnesses exercise it as such only as they receive it from him. When they testify the heavens shut up, a famine must ensue; perhaps "not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." (See Amos viii. 11, &c.) In Rev. xvii. 15, it is said, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." At the very time then, these witnesses testify the fact that the nations must be drenched in blood, the plague must spread its desolations; God having foreseen the wickedness of men, and having his judgments in reserve, has prepared his witnesses to proclaim the coming calamities. Thus the heavens are shut up when the witnesses proclaim it (see 1 Kings xvii. 1, James v. 17) and blood and pestilence when they predict it. [Eze.v. 17.] Let me ask my brethren in the ministry, when they wish to establish a point of doctrine, of order, an ordinance, or any other fact relating to Christ or his kingdom, where they go for evidence but to these records as witnesses? If I wish to prove that Jesus is the Christ I go to these witnesses. Do I wish to prove the complete salvation in him of all his people? There is my appeal. In short, when I wish to evince what is right and what is not right, thither and only there I go. I need no better evidence than these witnesses afford me. As before intimated, the prime end of witnesses is the establishment of facts. Where then, can we go to sustain our position but to these records? The Son does not come down and work miracles visibly himself, or by inspired men, as in days of yore; neither does the Holy Ghost portray those wondrous and miraculous displays of power as he did anciently. We can not rely upon the ministry, nor yet the church, in their and her present imperfect state, to settle disputed points. Let us, then, still cleave, to those faithful records that we all have been so frequently driven to in

cases of emergency, and we shall not lack testimony to substantiate every true position we may take.

A few remarks respecting the killing of the witnesses, and I will dismiss the subject for the present, as I have perhaps already transcended the limits that should be afforded me.

I understand the *beast* that was to effect this work to be the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, and that he accomplishes his designs by the means and instruments that he uses in the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt. Whether the slaying relates to the former, the present, or to some future time I will not positively say, because I do not know. Whether the three days and a half in which their dead bodies were to be seen in the streets of the great city refers to a definite period of three years and a half, as some suppose, or whether it has reference to something like an equal division of time, as seven days constitute all time, I cannot say. But, as their dead bodies were seen in the great city, they must have been killed there, and if killed there, they must in some sense have been there before the killing. Now, if we retrospect the going off of the New School and Means factions, within the last half century, I suppose it will be admitted that many individuals, parts of churches, and perhaps some entire ones that were mainly sound in the faith, were led off with those factions, to mingle with the daughters of Babylon, carrying with them these witnesses; and from that time onward, with their so-called "Bible Societies" and other kindred and unscriptural institutions, a murderous war was commenced and has been carried on against those witnesses, until, although their bodies are seen there, if the spirituality or life of them is not entirely extinct at this time, it presents but a flickering taper, likely to expire at any moment. Who has not seen and heard the "Rev. clergy," with all their energy, learning, talent and tact, pummeling those witnesses as though they were determined to beat the very life and spirit out of them, turning away their ears from the truth, being turned to fables, tracts? &c. But mark, we are not informed that their dead bodies shall be seen in the city of the New Jerusalem, for in that case the Lord might be left without a witness, which cannot be while his kingdom stands, ["and it shall stand forever"] and while he has servants "to testify the gospel of the grace of God," and who SHALL preach the gospel of the kingdom in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then, and not until then, shall the end come.

My dear brethren and sisters, let us stand by these true and faithful witnesses, and whether in the valley or upon the mountain top, whether in prosperity or adversity, in weal or woe, in sickness or health, in life or death, they portray and prove to you the panoply in which you are to stand, the Victor by whose blood you are to overcome, they are given by the inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that you may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. With your Bibles in your hands, and the Spirit of the living God in your hearts, to open your understanding that you may understand them, you will be enabled to prove your

calling and election, your doctrine, your order, your commendable conduct and conversation, your sonship, and therefore your heirship and joint heirship with Christ, your rich and blessed Savior, and therefore, too, your indemnified title to an eternal inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away; but fling to the winds, or cast to the "moles and the bats" those earthly and blind creatures of darkness, every idea and every practice that is not confirmed by these "two witnesses."

Permit me still to address you, my brethren and sisters, in the endearing relation of a brother, in hope of a full, and with you a joint fruition of the inheritance of the saints in light.

J. F. JOHNSON.

I John 3:14,15.

Georgetown, Ky., March, 1862.

BROTHER BEEBE: - In perusing the fourth number, current volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, my attention was called to the following request:

"Will Elder J. F. Johnson, of Kentucky, drop a few thoughts on 1 John iii. 14, 15, and oblige a reader of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES?"

T. TRIPLETT.

I cannot conceive why it is that my brethren and friends so frequently solicit my views on different and sometimes (to me) mysterious passages of scripture. If they could see my insufficiency as their unworthy servant feels it, they probably would make their requests to abler brethren. And, were I convinced that the Lord had called and chosen only the wise men after the flesh, the mighty and noble, I should despair of accommodating them. But, as he has chosen the foolish, weak, base and despised things, to confound the wise, mighty, &c., I am encouraged to do the best I can to serve them. Again, were I conscious that I could exercise any considerable degree of influence over those who read my poor communications on the subjects proposed, I should approach them with more timidity. But, as I hope and trust that none, will endorse my views unless they are sustained by the scriptures, I am probably not at liberty, as a servant, to withhold such ideas as I may have when called on. It is much easier, however, for my friends to make requests than for me to comply. The subject proposed reads as follows:

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John iii. 14,15.

Perhaps there are but few portions of the holy scriptures that is further beyond the power of Arminians to reconcile to their theory than this, together with its connection. If it be a fact that our nature in the work of the new birth is so renovated as to change them from natural - carnal, to spiritual - heavenly ones, or if our natural passions are so changed as to lose their relish for natural objects, and desire only heavenly ones, in short, if all our natural enmity, malice, wrath, hatred, &c., are slain in that work, I cannot see why it is that the same individual is styled in the text a *brother*, and a *murderer*. Evidently the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are clearly exemplified in this connection; and it is as evident that the Spirit cannot perform the works of the flesh, as it is that the flesh cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit. I see no possibility of reconciling the different declarations in this connection without admitting the fact that the christian is a complex character, possessing two distinct and radically different natures; one completely holy, sinless, and therefore, incorruptible; the other entirely sinful, unholy and corrupt. As these two different natures are found in the same person, it is perfectly rational to suppose that there will be an incessant conflict going on between them, and every well informed christian knows that this is the case; the flesh and spirit lust against each other. Perhaps we cannot imagine a more thorough antagonism between any other two things. In the sixth verse of this chapter it is said, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." Now, all christians do know that they sin continually; and it is also clearly shown in the scriptures that they have an existence in which they do not, cannot sin. Erskine says of himself,

"To good and evil equal bent,
I'm both a devil and a saint."

Will any doubt the Christianity of Peter? He heartily acknowledged Christ to be the Son of the living God, and was told by him that flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but his Father which is in heaven. Peter affirmed thrice that he loved him, and appealed to him the third time as knowing it; and yet Christ says to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Although all the Lord's people possess this depraved nature, although Paul, the reputable apostle of Jesus Christ, possessed it in so great a degree that he acknowledged himself the chief of sinners, and protested that no good thing dwelt in his flesh, (all that is born of the flesh is flesh,) yet John declares in the text that, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." But we are so prone to seek for this life and love in our depraved natures, lives, persons and

passions, that failing to find them there, we often doubt our having any participation in them. By nature we are all Arminians, and when we give heed to our own arminian proclivities, and conclude that our natural lives must be renovated, and our natural passions changed from the love of natural objects to that of spiritual or heavenly ones; and when we find them still glued to earthly things, or natural objects, we often seem to forget 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," that we still carry with us this natural man, this sinful body of death, and cannot be delivered from it until we slumber in our last sleep. As often then as we seek to find the life of God, or the love of God exercised toward him or his people by our natural passions, so often we shall find ourselves disappointed, and doubting our interest in that eternal life and undying love to God and to his people.

I will here mention some of my own meditations on this subject, not as proof of my position, but to illustrate my thoughts, (for it is thoughts my friend has called for,) on the subject. While residing in Warwick, N. Y., having retired to bed at the residence of my esteemed brother, E. M. Bradner, of that place, lamenting my barrenness and lack of love, or a feeling sense of love to God, the question occurred to me, Have you the love of God in you at all? Immediately I commenced strictly and anxiously searching myself until I had ransacked seemingly every faculty and corner, and finally arrived at the conclusion that I had not. My feelings at that time perhaps can be better imagined by those who may have had similar exercises, (if any have had such,) than I can express them. While gloomily reflecting on the matter, a portion only of a very familiar connection of scripture occurred to my mind, immediately attracting my attention so entirely that I could not or did not recollect its connection for a considerable time. That, however, was sufficient for the time being. It was the closing part of the eighth chapter of Romans, "The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Directly it occurred to me that I was searching in myself for what could be found nowhere else but in Christ Jesus our Lord. I am not yet prepared to think this was a delusion. Although I often doubt my having an interest in those blessings which were given Christ's people in him before the world was, still I am assured that they are there, and there only to be found. And it is a signal blessing, my dear brethren, that they are there, and there safely kept in reserve for his needy children - kept ready to be dealt out to them in every time of need - kept as our everlasting portion to which we have an indemnified title. They were given us in our Father's will, confirmed to us by his immutable oath and promise, and ratified and sealed by the blood of our Redeemer. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;" the heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. How we should rejoice that they, as well as we, are all preserved in our dear Savior, and not committed to our keeping. Were they to be found in us, and committed to our keeping, as the poor Arminians think, we could soon lose ourselves, blessings and all. But it is in HIM we

have our life, peace and love for him or our brethren, and it is only by that faith which is his gift that we can know that we have passed from death unto life. We are not informed that we can at all times know this fact; but I am persuaded that there are times when all the children of God know that they love the brethren, although we often fear we do not love them as we should. O! That we could all, "Let brotherly love continue;" do nothing to mar or hinder it, for I am persuaded that the saints feel no more happy at any time than when their hearts are filled with love to their heavenly Father and his children. When that is the case, they have proof positive that they have passed from death unto life. Such is the cunning of the adversary that he exhibits a counterfeit for almost every privilege and blessing we enjoy, except love, and that he is a stranger to. He uses its counterplot, hatred.

"The devils know and tremble too,
But Satan cannot love."

Love is an exotic production. Neither the world, the flesh, or the devil can produce love to God or the brethren. Its very name is melody.

"Love is the sweetest bud that grows,
Its beauty never dies;
Below among the saints it blows,
And ripens in the skies.

Pure glowing red and spotless white,
Its perfect colors are;
In Jesus all its sweets unite,
And look divinely fair."

Our natural love, when properly directed to the earthly objects of our affections and duly mutualized, is perhaps, the most pleasant sensation that we enjoy in this imperfect state. But the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and in full exercise to God and to our brethren, transcends that as the heavens are higher than the earth. In the exercise of that heaven born principle, all fear is cast out, all doubts banished, and multitudes of sins hidden. Then,

"How happy are they who their Savior obey,
And whose treasures are laid up above;
Tongue can not express the sweet comfort and peace,
Of a soul in its earliest love."

O that we could all feel more of that soul-soothing, heart cheering principle. How happily the moments of the careworn pilgrim pass away when that wonderful love that the Father hath bestowed upon us predominates. Then it is that we "know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

"He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." I suppose there is such a thing as death to christians while they live; [see I Tim. v. 6, Rev. iii. 1,] and this I take to be the demise of their religious enjoyment or comfort. In the absence of love to the brethren we suffer this death. But, "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Does it not seem strange that it is intimated here that one may be a brother in the church and at the same time a murderer? We are not to suppose, however, that the murder alluded to is taking away the natural life. No; it is hatred to a brother; that is the murder here spoken of; whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. Here again we have the work of the old man exemplified. There is the *him* that eternal life does not abide in, for he must *die*. It is impossible that the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, should exercise hatred to his brother. It is in the relation we bear to Cain, who was of that wicked one, that we exercise hatred to a brother. But this murder, the slaying of the religious comfort and enjoyment of ourselves and brethren, is to be viewed differently from the overt act of taking away the natural life of a fellow-being. Before we poor, short-sighted creatures can detect murder the outward act must be committed. It is not so with the Lord, who knoweth what is in man. He says in Mat. v. 21, 22, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." The Lord then looks at the thoughts and intents of the heart, and there detects crime. We can not always judge correctly by our acts, for they may be performed from motives that would exonerate the performer from all crime, while the same acts instigated by different motives would be highly criminal. I, as a surgeon, may amputate my fellow's limb when necessary to his benefit, and all would be right. But if I do it when not necessary, with intent to maim and injure him, it is egregiously wrong. The intent, therefore, may constitute the crime, independent of the overt act. - See Mat. v. 23-28. We should remember that we are at all times under the immediate inspection of the all-wise God, who scans every thought and scrutinizes every passion that lurks within us, and this should make us careful how we entertain hatred to a brother. In my humble opinion we are murderers, in the sense of the text, when we do so. "And ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." We should remember that each brother possesses those two natures or two men, (the old and new) which are contrary to each other, and whose aims and ends are very diverse. I can not imagine how those who so vehemently oppose what they stigmatize as the "two men doctrine" can reconcile their views to this text. Dare they advocate the idea that "that which is born of the Spirit," or "born of God," can be chargeable with murder in any sense? It is said in the preceding part of this chapter

that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he can not sin, because he is born of God." Let it not be forgotten that hatred is enumerated among the works of the flesh.- Gal. v. 20.

Then it must be the fleshly or old man of sin that has not this eternal life abiding in him. May the Lord enable us, my dear brethren, to put off the old man with his deeds, to put on the new man and realize his fruits. A murderer is a despicably ugly character; let us not deserve the name by exercising hatred to a brother. Wretched and miserable must be the feeling when our bosom rankles with hatred to a brother! In its presence the cup of joy is dashed with gall and vinegar, the noblest deeds of Christianity and virtue are paralyzed, and an impetus is given to the vile bickerings of infidelity! The fragrance of the "Rose of Sharon" ceases to regale us with its odorous perfumes, the "Lily of the Valley" droops its beautiful head, and the nauseous, piercing thistle and the pricking thorn thrive and do their work in the presence of hatred. It is calculated to drive from the abode of the saints the sweet angel of peace and inaugurate in its stead the cruel god of war.

How different the effects of love, a prominent fruit of the Spirit! It inspires the possessor with the noblest deeds and virtues and drives the vagrant hatred from the dwellings of the saints. The rose and the lily bloom afresh in its presence; the fragrance of the one and the beauty of the other charm and decorate the garden of God, and the thistle and the thorn wither at its touch. The black demon hatred quails at the approach of love - hides its knavish head. They are complete counterplots and cannot dwell together. They originate in different sources, dwell in different elements, and are doomed to different destinations. An uncompromising war is going on between them, but it is a war of no doubtful tendency. Hatred fights in the dark, at a distance; it cannot stand the onward charge of love in the light. But the conflict will soon be over, the battle cease. Hatred shall be banished forever from the presence of the saints, for they shall dwell forever in the presence of their God, in a "city to come." "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there," no larking place for the miscreant hatred to hide his detestable head, but where love shall live, and thrive, and bloom, and bless its subjects, nourished and cherished in the vitalizing beams of the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS! "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I know not whether "A reader of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES" will allow me to address him as a brother, (as he has not used the relation) but should he or others be benefited by the thoughts suggested I shall be amply paid for penning them; and remain still, as I humbly trust, a brother and servant to the household of faith.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Reply To Brother John Messmore. Duty Repentance.

Georgetown, Ky., April 25, 1862.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - I some time ago received a letter from my esteemed friend and brother, John Messmore, of Fayette County, Ohio, in which he says:

"As this is a day of cavil and differences, no marvel if there should be a slight difference among the children of God, and that on every important subject, too. We, as a church, at Waterloo, have been favored in regard to differences as much as any church in Ohio. Brother N. Loofbourrow has come to the conclusion that he would make a judge of brother Johnson, if he would be so good as to give his views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. The difference is in respect to the command set forth by Paul to the Athenians, Acts xvii. 30, latter clause: 'But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.' We wish you to be particular on the ALL MEN EVERYWHERE to repent."

I hope my brethren will excuse me for respectfully declining to be a judge in the case. I am willing, however, to do the best I can with my limited capacity in aiding them to recognize the conclusion arrived at in relation to this and all other subjects by the King who reigns in righteousness and the princes who rule in judgment, those who were seated upon twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel; "For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our King," &c. It may not be amiss to observe; First, that the apostle was addressing the "too superstitious" Athenians, exhibiting to them THE UNKNOWN GOD (whom they ignorantly worshiped) as the God of providence, *not of salvation by grace*, knowing that it was HIM only that could "GIVE grace and glory," and that grace and salvation were never designed to be taught *by man to men* who were not "born of the Spirit," as grace and all things that pertain to salvation are spiritual gifts, which natural men receive not, and cannot know. He presents God, therefore, to them as the Creator and Preserver of all things, the providential Benefactor of all men; and that he is not worshiped, with men's hands, as though he needed anything, as he gives, to all life and breath and all things; that he has made of one blood all the nations, and appointed their times and the bounds of their habitation. "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." There is a marked difference in this language of the apostle to those who "ignorantly worship," and that used to those who "worship in spirit and in truth." The language to them is, "Seek, and ye SHALL find;" but here it is, "If haply they might," &c. This word *haply* signifies, "by chance, perhaps it may be." Paul could not say, as it is said to Christ's disciples, Seek,

and ye shall find, nor yet as work-mongers do, that all may or can find the Lord by seeking after him, for he knew that none by seeking could find him out; but he uses the word *haply* because it was not known to him whether they were to find him or not. And then this other expression, "feel after him," seems to represent to me something like one groping or feeling in the dark, or without light. He then informs them that he is not far from every one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being, as certain of their own poets had said, For we are all his offspring. And as that fact had been admitted by them, they ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at." While he had not made any special revelation of himself as the God of providence to any nation save the Jews, he winked at their ignorance and superstition, as though he did not see it, (for, to wink is "to close the eyes, to seem not to see;") or in, other words, he withheld his judgments, and did not punish the heathen for their sacrilege, as he did the Jews for theirs, to whom he had by so many outward demonstrations made known himself as their divine Superintendent, and upon whom he so frequently sent his judgments and just retribution for their idolatry. But as he had now made so many visible displays of his eternal power and Godhead to all nations by numerous miracles, signs and mighty wonders, by relieving the demoniac, healing the sick, raising the dead, magnifying or multiplying a few loaves and fishes to feed thousands, calming the raging tempest, allaying the high rolling billows, with many other open and outward manifestations of his Deity, he "now commands all men everywhere to repent," turn away, or cease from serving those dumb idols. Now, as before intimated, I do not understand the apostle here to be treating upon or undertaking to teach those idolaters the way of life and salvation, of presenting the Lord to them in the relation of a Savior of sinners, nor of speaking of that repentance which is unto life, from the fact that *this* repentance is a *command*, that is always spoken of in the scriptures as a *gift*. Hence we read in Acts v. 31, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to GIVE repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And again xi. 38, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles GRANTED repentance unto life." Thus the scriptures clearly distinguish between the repentance that is a command and that which is a gift. Idolatry is a most fruitful source of evil, and the Lord in this particular case, as well as in many others, commanded the nations, or all men everywhere, to repent, turn away from or cease from their sacrilegious services. He has certainly the undisputed right to command his rational creatures to cease from their outward acts of rebellion against him - he has in many instances forbidden such rebellion, and often have the nations writhed under his sore chastisements, by disregarding his authority and bowing down to idols. How often did he command the Jews, *as a nation*, (not as christians, nor to make them such,) to abstain from their idolatry, and how often did he visit them with righteous retribution for their disobedience! And now that he has so conspicuously portrayed his divine power as the wise and provident God of the universe, showing that he gives to all life and breath and

all things, no nations need expect to escape his rod when they look to idols, and worship them instead of him. It matters not whether they are made of gold, silver, wood or stone, or whether those set up in the imaginations of men. If we pay adoration to a god that cannot save without men as means or instruments, or one that is desiring very much to save everybody, but cannot, because they will not repent, believe, &c., or one that cannot reach the case of the heathen without Missionary Boards, men and money, or in short, one who does not work all things after the counsel of his own will, cause his counsel to stand, and do all his pleasure, we are, to all intents and purposes, worshiping an idol, and ought, as rational beings, to repent of our wickedness, and turn away from it. When such commands are given, and we obey them to the letter, we reap the fruits of our obedience amply in this world, but that has nothing to do with preparing us for another. Let us not forget, then, that a command to repent, and a gift of repentance, are very different. A command is not a gift, neither is a gift a command; and these two are diverse in their nature, operation, tendencies and effects. When a crime has been committed, a command from an authoritative source, given to repent, and that command obeyed strictly, it does not place the individual or nation in any better condition than he or it occupied before the commission of the crime, or repentance occurred. When the Lord had placed the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, blessed them with the plenitude of its fruits, and the high privileges they enjoyed, when they went after idols, and he commanded them to repent, and they disobeyed, he punished them rigorously for their sacrilege. If they did repent, he simply restored them to their former prosperity and privileges. They were not enhanced thereby, but set back rather to their previous condition. Not so, however, with that repentance which is a gift. It manifests an onward and upward tendency. The possessor is developing a more exalted position than was occupied before the gift was bestowed, and, therefore, it is said to be "repentance unto life," and "not to be repented of." There is nothing more loquacious than the argument that Arminians attempt to sustain by this text, that the Lord is commanding all graceless men to repent and turn to God, that they may be saved. "Salvation is of the Lord," &c., and all that pertains to that eternal life to which his people are saved is from the same source, as Peter has declared, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."

But my brother wishes me to be particular in noticing the "All men everywhere to repent." I have no objection to giving this command its widest possible latitude, and admitting it to be obligatory in its true and legitimate sense upon every man that ever did or ever will hear it. But it is evident from the connection with which this text stands, that the apostle was addressing the Athenians in a national and not in an individual capacity. After being encountered by the Epicureans and Stoics, he was taken and brought to Areopagus or Mars' Hill, which was the highest court in Athens, and there publicly addressed them in their national character; and upon the subject of God's creating all nations, sustaining and providing for them, and therefore, his right to command and

require their obedience. How perfectly absurd then is the notion of conditionalists who contend that this is repentance unto life, and that all individuals are thus commanded to repent as a condition of salvation! How many myriads of men have lived and died since the utterance of this mandate, who never heard of this command! Men who thus argue seem to have no general idea of the scriptures, but must particularize every general expression, and confine each to local or individual cases. Thus, in Luke ii. 10, it is said, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to ALL PEOPLE" Was it and has it been *good tidings* and *great joy* to every individual person? What great joy was it to Herod and ALL Jerusalem with him when they heard the news? See Matthew ii. 3. The truth of the case is, that the Lord was about to transcend the narrow limits of Judea and Palestine with the revelation of himself, and the people of all nations, Gentiles as well as Jews, were to be glad and rejoice in the name of a Savior. Again, in Acts ii. 12, it is said, "And they were ALL amazed and in doubt, saying one to another, what meaneth this?" In the fifth verse of this same chapter it is said, "There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, DEVOUT MEN out of every nation under heaven," who said, "We do hear in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." Are we to conclude because the word ALL is used here, that each individual of that immense concourse heard in their own tongues the wonderful works of God, and were amazed and in doubt? If so, why is it said in the very next verse, "Others mocking, said, These men are full of new wine?" The truth is, that the *all* who heard it and were amazed and in doubt, were those *devout* characters, and the *all people* in the former text are simply to be understood as referring to people of different nations, and neither can reasonably be understood to have reference to all individual persons. The fact is, as before observed, that Paul was addressing the people in their *national*, not their individual relations, proclaiming God as the sole *Ruler* and wise disposer of men and things. Those were the subjects of his discourse, and not that of the salvation of sinners. And when he refers to Christ, it is not in the relation of a Savior or Mediator, but that of a JUDGE. He, therefore, bases the command to repent upon the consideration that God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. This widespread development of the Deity in which the Lord has so extensively made himself known to the different nations, or all men everywhere, leaves them in a condition different from the one in which they stood in the former times of their entire ignorance of him, and in which their superstition is not to be "*winked at*," as previously, and therefore, he commands all men everywhere to repent. But, we should remember that the mere repenting in the sense of this text, and abstaining from the worship of idols, beneficial as it may be to nations or individuals here in this world, has nothing to do in preparing them for another, or for the spiritual service of God; for the preparation of the heart for that service is from the Lord. See Prov. xvi. 1. It has nothing to do with saving sinners from their sins, for Christ has done that once, effectually and forever; it has nothing to do with giving them eternal life, for that is the Lord's work exclusively. That

repentance that God *gives* to his people is different, widely different. They are not driven to the exercise of it by a command, but led by the goodness of God himself. - Rom. ii. 4. They are not satisfied merely to cease from sacrilege, but they pant for God as the hunted hart pants for the cooling water brooks; not content with merely forsaking their sins, but they hunger and thirst after righteousness. Not set back to a former state of uprightness, but moving onward and upward in a higher, holier, happier sphere, and finally "raised to a paradise of bliss, where God triumphant reigns." Wide indeed is the contrast between the repentance which is a command, and that which is a gift. But that gift is beyond the extent of mortal arms! Beyond the scan of mortal wisdom; and beyond the control of mortal powers to reach, see, or exercise, until God is pleased graciously to bestow it!

I have now tried to comply with the request of my brethren, as well as I can. If what I have written is in accordance with the scriptures, I hope they will be satisfied, notwithstanding its homeliness; if not, I trust that some friend will correct the error.

I freely submit this, brother Beebe, to your disposal, and still continue to be, as I trust, the friend and brother to you, and all the household of faith.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Hebrews 2:14.

BROTHER BEEBE: - In looking over the ninth number, present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, I discover that sister Lovicy Brown, of Illinois, has asked for my views on Hebrews ii. 14:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

I am aware that many brethren whom I highly esteem have different views on this mysterious portion of holy writ, and therefore, what I may say on the subject can not meet the approval of all. It is not so pleasant for those who sincerely desire unity among the children of God to write or speak on subjects, when conscious that those they love differ with the writer or speaker; but still I think the investigation of the subjects upon which we may have different ideas is proper, and often profitable to the saints when the elucidation is conducted in a christian spirit. If I am wrong and subject that error to the examination of "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," and they, thus having the opportunity, convert others with myself from the error of our way, their act is both commendable and profitable to those who are thus

converted, particularly to myself, the propagator. Having this view of the subject, I hesitate not to give such views as I have, hoping that our different ideas upon abstruse portions of the scriptures will not disturb the harmony that exists amongst us on the plain and positive points of the doctrine of the salvation of sinners by grace, and grace alone.

This text, together with its connection, presents to our view some of the most important things pertaining to the salvation of poor, lost sinners. Jesus is exhibited as the great High Priest and Apostle of our profession, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High, angels and authorities being made subject to him, there to reign without a rival, until his enemies be made his footstool, or, until all those enemies be put under his feet, the last one of which is death. From that highly exalted position, or from heaven, God has spoken to us by him, and therefore, the apostle says we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, or pass without due attention; because much of the comfort and assurance of the saints depends upon a careful and earnest heed of those matters; and not only that, but neglect of those important matters is wrong, and certain to bring upon us, who neglect so great salvation, the Lord's chastising rod, from which there is no escape.

He then shows the dignified station in which man was placed in his first creation. Being made a little lower than the angels, he was set over the works of God's hands, having all things put under him. "But [continues the apostle] now we see not yet all things put under him." So signally has he fallen from the exalted position he occupied and the rule he exercised over the beast of the earth, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, that he is made to shudder at the approach of many of them, who are permitted to tear him to pieces, or otherwise destroy him. "But [adds the apostle] we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels [precisely where man was placed] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." Yes, he was [in the past tense] made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, but that suffering ended on Calvary, and therefore, "Death hath no more dominion over him." But, we see him [now in the present] crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God [not by suffering,] should [in the future] taste death for every man. So that when Arminians attempt to quote this text, "He *tasted* [in the past] death for every man," they pervert the language of the Scriptures by using the past instead of the present tense. This death is to be tasted "by the grace of God," and alludes, in my humble opinion, not to his suffering on the cross, but to the presence of Jesus by his grace in the hour of the death of his brethren, to thus taste or take away its sting, and finally, to not only taste, but swallow it up in victory, or totally destroy it so far as his brethren are concerned; and the brotherhood consists of; Both he that sanctifieth [setteth apart] and they who are sanctified [or set apart] who are all of One [Father,] for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

In this connection then, the holy writer alludes particularly and exclusively to Jesus and his brethren, those "many sons," which he engaged to bring to glory by the great and

important work of salvation which he accomplished by taking part of the same flesh and blood of which they are partakers. In the next verse preceding the text, he says. "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me." Here is portrayed a close and endearing tie of kindred relationship, or vital unity, and that relation based upon a sameness of parentage, for they are all of one Father. Christ is "The only begotten Son of God," and the younger brethren have their sonship in him, and are thus the children of God, as the children of Isaac were the children of Abraham. This sonship is a spiritual relationship, for they are all "Born of God," and "God is a Spirit;" and these "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," that Paul addresses "are built up a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." But as these children have a fleshly as well as a spiritual relationship, it was necessary that he should "be made like unto his brethren," sustain a like relationship, in order to bring those "many sons unto glory." *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."*

My sister wishes to know; "When the children *were* partakers of flesh and blood, was it in their natural or spiritual birth?" Had she asked when the children *are* partakers, the question would seem to me more in accordance with the text, for the apostle does not use the word *were*, referring to the past, but *are*, the plural of the present tense of the verb to be. This expression, then, cannot refer to the children as having partaken of flesh and blood originally, but in Paul's day it had reference to the then present time, and is to be so used in all time. Had he referred to the past by using the word *were*, we might, with some show of propriety, conclude that the children partook of flesh and blood in Adam, as some suppose; but I should then be puzzled to know what children they were that thus partook in that relation.

The Saviour says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and I suppose he meant what he said. If he did, he did not allude only to the fleshly fibers that cover our corporeal frames, but to all that is born of the flesh. In our natural birth then, according to Christ's definition, we are wholly and totally flesh, although all the component parts of the fleshly man, such as blood, bones, muscles, sinews, mind, soul, spirit, &c., make up his composition; yet the Lord includes all in the general term flesh, for all these are born of the flesh, and as before observed, "Which is born of the flesh is flesh," and Paul says, "The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." Again, if they are flesh, as Christ says, what would such a partaking be, but flesh? And what more would the child be after such a participation than a fleshly one? What advantage would accrue to that child by such a partaking? What comfort could he draw from such an idea? Can we claim, by our natural birth, any vital relationship to any but a natural father or his natural offspring? On what would rest our hope of immortality beyond the grave? Is not that hope based upon a vital and indissoluble unity with Christ, that we are partakers of the divine nature as well as the fleshly one? Convince me that there are no children to partake of flesh and blood, but the natural ones in the natural birth, and then my hope of a

glorious resurrection, and succeeding consummate bliss beyond the grave's dreary dominion, will be paralyzed forever. Now, if the children of the flesh are not the children of God, as Paul says, where shall we go to find them delineated? I shall go first to John i. 13, for there he tells us of those "Which were born, not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" and I conclude that those who are born of God are the children of God. Am I not right in this conclusion? Next let us go to John iii. 6, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Are not those who are born of the flesh the children of the flesh? And are the children of the flesh the children of God? Paul says not. Are not the children of the Spirit, or those who are born of the Spirit, the children of God? I know of no spirit they are born of, but God; for "God is a Spirit," and conclude, that they are the children of God. Let us next go to I Peter i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Is not that incorruptible seed Christ? And is he not God? Yea, "The true God and eternal life." Hear him, "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt have no God but me; for there is no Saviour besides me." Hosea xiii. 4. Is not the conclusion inevitable, then, that those who are "born of God," "Born of the Spirit," "Born of incorruptible seed," are the children of God, and that when one of those children are thus born, that child is a partaker of flesh and blood, or, takes its residence in a body of flesh as did the Saviour? Let us see whether this conclusion is corroborated by the plain language of the text; for that should always govern us in forming our opinions. "*He also Himself Likewise* took part of the same." This little adverb also, signifies, "in the same manner," and likewise, "in like manner." Now, if we can ascertain the manner in which he partook of flesh and blood, we may rest assured that it is "in the same manner" – "in like manner" that his children partake of it. When he partook of flesh and blood, he "came down from heaven," when a body was prepared him, which served as a temple for him to dwell in. John ii. 19-21. John saw his children, "the Holy City, new Jerusalem, [in like manner] coming down from God out of heaven." Rev. xxi. 2. And Paul says, "What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?" See I Cor. iii. 16 & vi. 19. Moreover, he is not of the world, "in like manner," his children are not of the world. John xv. 19 & xvii. 16. Then, the manner in which Christ partook of flesh and blood, was to come down from heaven, and therefore, is not of the world, but dwelt in a temple of flesh and blood. "In like manner," or "in the same manner," his children came down from God out of heaven [being born from above,] are not of the world, but dwell in a body of flesh and blood.

If this is the manner in which he partook of flesh and blood, and if the children and him partake of it in the same manner, in like manner, which the words also and likewise signify, how can we suppose that the children are partakers of flesh and blood in their natural birth, unless we conclude that they came down from God out of heaven at the time of their natural birth? The idea is preposterous. Which of the two ideas is the best calculated to comfort the people of God? That is one prime object to have in view. I

cannot imagine how the belief that it is only in the natural or fleshly birth that the children are partakers of flesh and blood could give any comfort, any evidence of anything beyond our fleshly relation or mortal state of existence. In that we are but the component parts of Adam, and "In Adam all die."

But we anticipate something beyond death; still, we have nothing originating in our natural birth for that hope to rest upon. But when the child that is born of the Spirit, and which "is spirit," is sent to take his residence in the body, and thus partake of flesh and blood, it brings the evidence of our "Adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" and we are then permitted to lawfully claim God as our Father, and have a testimonial of a free passport through the valley of the shadow of death, and onward to the glorious dawn of the morning of the resurrection; and a legal title to all the bliss and brilliant glory of that bright eternal day.

Thus the question is solved how the children of the flesh can be put among the children that are born of God, for it is by the law of adoption that they are legally entitled to the inheritance of a spiritual patrimony, and have Paul's assurance that, "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." When that auspicious day arrives;

"The trump of God shall rend the rocks,
And open adamantine locks;
Call forth the dead from death's dark dome,
And Jesus take his ransom'd home."

This will be the consummation of the most stupendous scene of condescension that ever was transacted upon this globe, the most amazing stoop of humility that mortals can contemplate upon. Wonderful exhibition of inimitable love! Inconceivable display of benign favor! The Son of God, though immaculate, bathed in sweat, blood, tears and overwhelmed with sufferings. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." In order to accomplish this transcendently glorious work, he must be a partaker of flesh and blood, for "it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, for the sins of his people."

And think of the majesty of him who put on this robe of flesh to complete this work of eternal salvation for poor, lost, rebellious sinners! Think of the exceeding, surpassing glory that so brilliantly adorned him before the world was, and then think of his dressing himself in a robe of suffering flesh and blood, like the brethren! Think! O, brethren! Think of his dignity, his sublime parentage, think of HIM, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and

took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." What unspeakable joy, what an earnest of unutterable glory it affords us to have an evidence by the Spirit of adoption that God our heavenly Father has "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." But, although we have received the Spirit of adoption to evince the legal initiation of the natural or fleshly child into the spiritual family, according to the law of adoption, like Paul, and all his brethren who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, we must wait for the complete and consummate adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, and groan within ourselves until our change comes; then shall we realize more fully the sublime mystery and great utility that Christ should take part of the same flesh and blood of which his children are partakers, "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." "Then shall we be satisfied when we awake with his likeness, when we behold his face in righteousness." Then, and not till then, shall we see him as he is, and be like him and enter into the full possession of the inheritance of the saints in light.

"To swim in seas of bliss, to strike the string,
And lift the voice to our almighty King;
To swell eternally our grateful lays,
And fill heaven's wide circumference with praise."

I submit the foregoing remarks first to your consideration, brother Beebe, and if you are pleased to publish them in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, to the judgment of the brethren, sisters and friends, who may examine them, particularly to that of sister Brown, hoping they will endorse or reject them as they may be corresponsive with, or antagonistical to the scriptures, and still crave a place in the affections and an interest in the prayers of the saints.

J. F. JOHNSON.

The Call And Qualification Of The Gospel Ministry.

Henry Co., Indiana, December, 1862.

MY VERY MUCH ESTEEMED BROTHER BEEBE: - I am at last seated to attempt a compliance with a request made some months ago, through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, but, not having access to a file, I cannot identify the number. Since that request was made several others have come to light through the same medium, and lest my brethren and sisters should conclude that I am disposed to treat their requisitions with silent indifference, I will here say, that if the Lord will, I shall try to give them the earliest convenient attention; and I hereby respectfully crave their forgiveness for the delay. My wife and self left our home in Kentucky early in July to visit our children and friends in Indiana and attend the associations; and the delicate health of the former, together with some other circumstances and business matters, have detained us until now, but we hope to return home within this month. Visiting the associations and other meetings, the social intercourse with much esteemed former friends, and beloved brethren and sisters, business transactions and hunting, have so fully engrossed the time, fast fleeting time, that I have felt little like writing. Attended the W. Water, Lebanon, Greenville and Conn's Creek Associations, all of which were peculiarly interesting. The request alluded to reads, I think, about as follows:

"Will brother J. F. Johnson, of Kentucky, give his views on the call and qualification of a gospel minister, and the evidence of that call." T.P.S.

I am often led to doubt my having realized an experimental sense of that "holy calling," and should that be the case I am ill qualified to write upon either the call, qualification, or evidence. My knowledge of the scriptures is so limited that, were it not for the hope that my brethren will bear with my weakness and look over my imperfections, I should certainly decline trying to comply with their requests.

In the first place let us inquire, What is a gospel minister? A minister is a servant, or "one who serves, waits on or attends another," or others. A gospel minister, then, is one who serves in the gospel of Christ, and is, strictly speaking, a servant of Christ. Christ and all the members of his body are identically one; "for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." Therefore the gospel minister is to be considered not only the servant to the head, but to all the members of his body. Hence, says the apostle, "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." - 2 Cor. iv. 5. If then, the gospel minister is the servant of Christ and his body, he must be placed under the control of Christ and the church; and, as Christ dwells in the church, and works in the members to will and to do of his good pleasure, he has the entire supervision of the whole matter, and what the church does under that controlling power is highly authoritative, placing the servant, or minister, under the most solemn and responsible obligations to Christ and his body, the church.

The *call* is evidently of God. Paul says, (Gal. i. 15, 16,) "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood," &c. And again, the same writer said to Timothy, "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."- 2 Tim. i. 9. And, as this language was addressed by one gospel minister to another, I presume it has reference more particularly to a call to the ministry, although it may refer in one sense to the calling of all the saints. This calling, like everything else that is done for the saints, is a work of grace, and must accord with God's purpose. It has no accordance, therefore, with the works of our latter-day theologians nor with their seminaries of theological lore. All the thousands that have been expended at those institutions, all the appeals that have been made to "pious young men" to take positions there, professedly to qualify them for the gospel ministry, have never, nor ever will amount to the call or qualification of one gospel minister. Neither the purpose or grace of God are looked to as a directory or sufficiency by the wire-workers of those institutions. Money, instead of the power of God, is their impetus; their own calculations and vain imaginations their directory, instead of God's purpose, and their own works, instead of the grace of God, their sufficiency. Then, their ministers are called not according to the purpose and grace of God, but according to their own calculations and works. The qualifications as well as the call of God's ministers present a complete counterplot to the ministers of Satan. When God calls his ministers they confer not with flesh and blood. When the enemies of the gospel call theirs, they must confer with flesh and blood for years for a suitable preparation. When the Lord undertakes the qualification of his servants he teaches them thoroughly that their sufficiency is of him. When men undertake to qualify theirs, they are taught to conclude that their sufficiency is of themselves. When the Lord begins the work of preparation with his own, they are made to conclude that they *can't* preach. Men, in the preparation of themselves or others for the work, are made to conclude that they *can* preach, and at it they go, but make sad work of it. When the Lord prepares his servants for the gospel ministry, they can, through Christ, which strengthens them, preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Men, in preparing themselves or others for a so-called gospel ministry, may toil through years of study to qualify them, yet they can't preach the gospel, with all the theological whitewash or untempered mortar that can be plastered over or daubed upon them. In common with all the children of God, his ministers are thoroughly taught to know that "the preparations of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord," that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," &c. Without multiplying quotations, and for more thorough, yea, for perfect instruction, such as I cannot give, I earnestly solicit my brother, and all others whom it may concern, to read carefully and

prayerfully the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, by which they may learn more correctly the qualifications of a gospel minister than I can teach them.

So far as the *evidences* of the call and qualification of a gospel minister are concerned, some of them are very discouraging, others more pleasant.

I know not that in their first tuition the servants of the church differ from their brethren. All the children of God are taught in their first lesson to know that they are unworthy sinners, lost sinners, helpless sinners; or, as the apostle has it, "without strength." How could they enter their feelings, sympathize with and comfort the poor, afflicted, mourning, hungering child of God, had they not felt the pangs and anguish to which they are all subjected?

Is not the leading object of their mission here to comfort and instruct God's people? But, after learning this lesson of their insufficiency in common with their brethren, he gives them a taste that he is gracious, for "the husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits." - 2 Tim. ii. 6. Having realized the bitterness of sin and tasted the sweet and consoling draughts that flow from the river that makes glad the city of God, he next prepares them to comfort the saints that are in any tribulation with the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted. See 2 Cor. i. 4. This lesson is similar to the first, from the fact that in it also they are taught their own insufficiency; for they must learn that their "sufficiency is of God." I do not suppose that the Lord has ever prepared one of his servants for the gospel ministry without teaching them thoroughly the requisite and important lesson that "the preparations of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord," and that without this all other preparations that can be made by men, aided by all the myriads of money that have been expended with a view of preparing students for the gospel ministry, have totally failed to make them any more available in that solemn service than would be sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. How sensibly was Moses made to feel his insufficiency when the Lord was about to send him on an important mission to his people who were groaning under oppression in the land of Egypt! When spoken to by the Lord he exclaims, "O, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore or since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." If I know any thing about the exercise of the Lord's ministers, I must conclude that they feel themselves the least, more illy qualified for the solemn service than any of their brethren, and are ready to say with Moses, "O, my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." It is necessary that the Lord's servants should feel and know their weakness, their nothingness, that they may rely wholly upon him who is their "*everlasting strength*;" then can they readily say with the prophet, "Even he (the BRANCH) shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory," and will not presumptuously arrogate to themselves as means, or instruments, the important work of making the materials (christians) of what the building is composed. They feel themselves unworthy to even "feed the church of God," which is their highest legitimate business, or to perform the most menial service at the feet of their brethren, even to wash

their feet, (exhort them to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called,) and such is their fear of dishonoring the holy cause they would defend, and in view of their native weakness, that their cry is similar to that of Jeremiah when he said, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child." But they are not permitted to carry out their resolution; for the Lord replies, "Say not, I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." - Jer. i. 6, 7. The Lord has said, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall not hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence." - Isaiah lxii. 6. It is the Lord's work, it must be accomplished, that sovereign mandate must be obeyed for there is no evading the all searching vision, resisting the almighty power of Jehovah; and the poor servant, sensibly deficient, trembling and dismayed, must go, witnessing, perhaps, the veritable language of the prophet, "Then I said, I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." On feeling the weighty responsibility that weighed down the apostle when he said, "For if I preach not the gospel I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." How appalling to poor, frail man, when convinced by the Spirit of his imbecility, to have the mandate of heaven, "KEEP NOT SILENCE," weighing down his depressed spirits, or the withering sentence, "Necessity is laid upon me," harassing his bewildered mind, while the thoughts of engaging in a holy vocation which he knows he is incompetent to perform, prostrates him in the valley of humility, (necessary valley,) until he is constrained to give up the last lingering hope of self-sufficiency and fix his final hope (blissful hope) upon the Lord, who says, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Thus are his servants made to trust in the Lord and have no confidence in the flesh.

Not the least of the evidences of a call to the gospel ministry is the approval of a gospel church. Certainly the Spirit of the Lord must accomplish the whole work, and I am far from believing that *that* Spirit, in that momentous work, is confined exclusively to the minister.

In the primitive days of the church "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them," and I suppose she is no better qualified to act independently of that Spirit now than she was then. If a minister could be profitable to the church, it is essential that there should exist a reciprocal sensibility between him and the members; and I am persuaded that nothing short of the Spirit of God can effectually harmonize their feelings. If I may judge from my own experience in the matter, the seeming approval and confidence of my dear brethren, together with their wholesome advice and encouragement during the doubts and trials through which I passed, have afforded me some of the most satisfactory testimonials and consoling reflections that I have had; and, with these reflections, I think that the servants of God should join the apostle to the Gentiles in saying, "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." On the other hand instances have occurred where would-be ministers have urged their services upon the church contrary to her desires, which seldom fails to mar her peace and quietude; but I have never known one such to prove profitable to her in their ministry. Such have frequently had occasion to remove their membership, (and not their residence,) from church to church for the sake of promotion, but they have generally and finally went off with the *Means* faction or some other party equally foreign from the Old School Baptists.

Another evidence afforded a gospel minister, and one which I consider not an insignificant one, is a continual opposition from the whole work-mongrel fraternity.

When "the heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money," "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake," the faithful minister of the gospel must calculate to be beset on every hand by those "greedy dogs," those howling shepherds, who are always fearful that their craft is in danger when the gospel of grace is faithfully proclaimed.

"But let not all this terrify,
Pursue the narrow path;
Look to the Lord with steadfast eye,
And fight the fight of faith."

The trying ordeals through which the true servants of God necessarily pass are well calculated to wean him from a self-sufficiency, and evince to him the propriety of trusting in the living God of Jacob, for "they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever."

The Lord will not withhold from his servants testimonials of his presence, which are better than life; for in his presence is fullness of joy and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore. How consoling when the Lord evinces to him he will "put words in his mouth." Then can he go in the strength of the Lord, and,

"Take his breastplate, sword and shield,
And boldly march into the field."

But he must not always expect ambrosial flowers to bestrew his pathway, downy beds to rest upon or delicious fare to feast upon. He must expect to encounter wearisome journeyings, various perils, painfulness, watchings, hunger, thirst, cold and nakedness, and often have to exclaim, "O, my leanness, my leanness!" Yet, in the name of his God he may lift up his banner, and in the strength and skill of the Captain of his salvation, sing,

"My Captain bids me onward go,
And in his strength I'll meet each foe;
He rules beneath, he reigns on high,
He'll seal my victory though I die."

The evidences that the Lord affords his faithful servants, in his infallible promises should embolden them to press toward the mark for the prize of their high calling; and while they reflect upon their origin and stability, see that these impregnable fortifications, these mighty ramparts reared by the Almighty, are but the mountain of his presence and power, and not the result of their own nature and strength, or skill, they should quietly and submissively bear their cross, and with it, wend their way along the valley of humility, (commendable valley,) and wait patiently the development of the Lord's purposes, promises and grace concerning them; "For (says Paul) ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." The lifelong experience of the servant of the Lord may be considered one continued lesson to teach him the propriety and necessity of a patient submission to the will of his divine Master, and, in learning that lesson, he will often be constrained to acknowledge the truthfulness of the expression of one who has said that "resignation sweeteneth the cup; but impatience dasheth it with vinegar."

"O! the dark days, the year around,
Of an impatient mind;
Through clouds and storms a summer breaks,
To shine on the resigned.

Yes, in a trial world like this,
When all that comes is sent,
Learn how divine a thing it is,
To smile and be content."

Respectfully submitted, first, Brother Beebe, to your discretion, then to Brother T. P. S., and others who may deem it to be worth their perusal.

I remain, I trust, in the best of ties,

J. F. JOHNSON.

The Scriptural Number Seven.

Georgetown, Ky., Feb. 19, 1863.

"Will brother J. F. Johnson, of Kentucky, give his views on the number seven, as the term is used in the scriptures? What are we to understand by it? There has been a great deal said about the seven golden candlesticks, but the term seven was not explained to my satisfaction. It has been spoken of as a perfect number, but I want to know what we are to understand from it." John Carihfield.

Brother Beebe, I find the foregoing request in the 14th number of the past volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Past experience proves to me that I cannot render satisfaction to all the readers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES in my attempts to answer their requests through that medium for my views on passages of the holy scriptures. I have received several private letters within the past few months; some commendatory and others adverse to the views I have heretofore given through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Permit me here to say that I am pleased that the columns of your periodical have been open for the discussion of the various subjects upon which we have written, if that discussion is conducted in a proper spirit, and that those who may see that I err, instead of my displeasure, will receive my hearty thanks for the detection of my errors through the same medium in which they are circulated. Whether I really know what we are to understand from the number seven as it is used in the scriptures, is a matter for those scriptures to decide, and for my brethren to judge when I shall have given them my views. The word seven, and its derivatives, are used perhaps over three hundred times in the holy scriptures, far exceeding in frequency that of any other number, which circumstance alone would induce us to suppose that an importance is attached to it above that of other numbers. Cruden, Butterworth and Brown all define it to be "a number of perfection," and they are the only theological lexicographers I have examined respecting it. Admitting those authors to be correct in their definition of the term, let us endeavor to examine it according to their description and in the light of scripture. In the second chapter of Genesis and second verse the number is first alluded to, where, it is said, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from his work which he had made." Concluding that seven is "a number of perfection," I suppose that we have here exhibited the perfection of God's creation as to time, manner, matter, and every thing else pertaining thereto. His wisdom, his power, his glory and his eternal Godhead were conspicuously developed on the seventh day. What a miraculous display of the perfection of the Deity was portrayed on that day! Above us the sun, "which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race," flings out from his golden face myriads of brilliant beams, spreading over the wide domain of God's creation a lustrous flood of effulgence to lay open to view and decorate with beauty the wide expanse and great variety of herbage and animalcules as

they drifted in untold multitudes from the prolific breath of the Almighty, when he spake and it was done, commanded and it stood fast. In that lucid flood we behold the perfection of creation in all the verdure and beautiful scenery that surrounds us, in every crawling insect, rambling beast and fluttering fowl that we behold. Yonder, in the watery world, the aqueous tribes equally exhibit the perfection of the work of God. Ranged in perfect order from the lowest up to the highest grade, all, all occupying the precise location or moving in the exact sphere in which the perfection of his wisdom, in his undeviating counsel and immutable decree, had ordered, so that the sweet singer of Israel was constrained to cry out with rapture, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee." With profound adoration and ineffable delight, with hearts attuned with sweetest concord, and voices swelling the noblest strains of melody, caroling the highest praises of the great Creator, "The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" in view of the perfection of the handiwork of God. The same perfection is seen in the fair-faced moon, as she majestically moves onward in her nocturnal journey, the quivering stars, whether stationary or rolling along their shining pathway in their respective orbits, although they may glide onward with the rapidity of the electric flash, and although myriads of them were flung like flaming meteors from his almighty hand, each one under the directory of the perfect law of nature's God, has traced the line marked out by the finger of perfection, so that, in all the thousands of years that have gone by not one has been known to conflict with its fellow. Thus the "number of perfection" evinces the perfect time, the perfect manner and the perfect order in which the perfect works of God are seen as accomplished by the hand of perfection.

"Perfection is seen in the works of his hand,
In the spheres that they move, in the order they stand;
Perfection rules regent, Jehovah must reign,
In the heavens, the earth, and the wide spreading main."

Again, to prove the perfection of his providence and his purposes concerning the children of Israel in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh is made to see in his dreams seven well favored kine, fat-fleshed, and seven ill-favored ones, lean-fleshed, the latter eating up the former; and seven ears of corn to come up upon one stalk, rank and good, and seven blasted ones upon another, blasted with the east wind, the latter devouring the former; which Joseph interprets to be seven years of plenty and seven of famine, the latter consuming the production of the former; thus opening the way for the transition of the Israelites to Egypt, where the Lord perfected all his works there concerning them. In the giving of the law to his people Israel, and in their obedience of his statutes, he particularizes the seventh day, the seventh week, the seventh month, the seventh year, and the seven times seven or forty and ninth year, as a memorial and testimonial of the perfection of his work, of his rest, and of all his works of perfection concerning them. -

Exodus xx. 10; Deuteronomy xvi. 9; and Numbers xxix. 1. Exhibiting the perfection of his conquests in their behalf, he drives out seven nations before them mightier than they, (Deut. vii. 1,) causing them to flee seven ways. (xxviii. 7) And when he led Joshua and his hosts before the strong-walled city of Jericho, to illustrate the perfection of the victory there; seven priests, bearing seven trumpets, were to compass the city seven days, and on the seventh seven times blowing upon their trumpets. Josh. vi. 4-16. If, indeed, our authors are correct, that the Lord designed and the Jews regarded the number seven as "a number of perfection," we shall find, of course, that where he uses it, or where they use it under his supervision, that perfection will be exhibited in connection with the use of the term. And is not that perfection clearly manifest in the circumstances thus far alluded to?

Next, let us refer to a few of the many cases where the term is used in relation to the sacramental order, the altar, offerings, sacrifices and purifications connected with that order. In the first place Aaron's habiliments were to consist of seven articles. The coat, the robe of the ephod, the breastplate, the girdle, the mitre and the holy crown upon the mitre. The son that succeeded him in the high priest's office, when he came into the congregation to minister in the holy place in his father's stead, was to put on those seven articles seven days; and seven days were necessary to make an atonement and sanctify the altar upon which the offerings were to be made. - Ex. xxix. 5, 6, 30-37, and Lev. xvi. 19. Again, the blood of the bullock which Aaron was to offer for himself and house was to be sprinkled upon the mercy seat seven times. - Lev. xvi. 14. Time would fail me to mention the different instances in which the number seven is used in the purifications, offerings and sacrifices, and in regard to the time of those rituals. In the cleansing of the leper the priest was to sprinkle him with the blood of the bleeding bird seven times, then the leper was to tarry out of his tent seven days, and the seventh day to shave off his hair; and a part of the offering which he was to make was "a log of oil," a portion of which the priest was to sprinkle before the Lord seven times. - Lev. xiv. 7-9, 16-27. The Syrian general, Naaman, was commanded by Elisha, the prophet, to wash in the Jordan seven times, and the result was a perfect cleansing of his leprosy. - 2 Kings v. 10-14. When David and his hosts went to the house of Obed-Edom to bring to the house of David the ark of the Lord, the Levites offered seven bullocks and seven rams; and when Hezekiah had thoroughly cleansed the house of the Lord he ordered to be offered for the kingdom, for the sanctuary and for Judah seven bullocks, seven rams, seven lambs and seven he goats. - 2 Chron. xxix. 21. All these, and numerous other texts of the same class which might be adduced, evidently stand as so many prominent directories to the one great propitiatory sacrifice that was offered on Calvary, and which "PERFECTED FOREVER them that are sanctified." In connection with the foregoing texts we might contemplate upon the seventh day on which God rested, and on which he commanded the twelve tribes to rest, as indicative of the perfect rest that remains for his people. To illustrate the perfection of God's work as to the time, manner, &c., of his dealings in reference to that people, a holy convocation was inaugurated for the seventh month, and within the same a

feast of seven days. - Lev. xxiii. 21; Num. xxix. 1-12. In this holy convocation in the month Abib, which was the seventh month of the civil year, the feast of the Passover was observed by Moses, (Deut. xv. 1,) and in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh of the sacred year, the same feast was observed by Solomon when he assembled the elders of Israel, the heads of the tribes, fathers, &c., to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the city of David to the house of the Lord, which Solomon built, (I Kings viii. 1, 2,) to memorialize the paschal lamb, the exit from Egyptian bondage, and point to the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice that perfected his people forever. In the seventh year, to indicate the "perfect law of liberty," and the rest which God vouchsafes to his people, every Hebrew that had been sold into bondage was to be peremptorily released, the land, servants, beasts, all were to rest. Not only was the seventh year thus to be celebrated, but the Lord said, "and thou shalt remember seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years." Then came the year of general release or grand sabbatical year, when not only the Jews and hired servants were to be released who had been sold into bondage, but all debts were to be canceled, all lands and other property that had been alienated were to be restored to the tribes or families to which they formerly belonged; when the great trump of jubilee was to sound, and the Lord said, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. - Lev. xxv. 2-16. Thus we see typically and beautifully portrayed the *perfect* release of the people of God from the bondage of sin, the perfect liquidation of every claim that stood against them, and the perfect rest that remains for them. Moreover, the church, to exhibit the spotless purity with which Christ has enrobed her, is comparable to "a candlestick of pure gold;" and, in Zech. iv. 2, as having attached to it seven lamps and seven pipes, to exhibit the perfection of the light as it radiates from the lamps, and produced by the blazing oil, conducted through the seven pipes to the seven lamps at their terminus, from the bowl upon the top of it, which I suppose, represents Christ, united to the church as her head, and from whom emanates all the effulgence of the "Father of lights," in all its pristine purity and perfection. Then again, to remind us of the perfection of the instruction which his words afford her, they are compared to silver purified seven times. Psalm xii. 6. Still further to elicit the perfection of the church and the light afforded her, her seven branches in Asia are presented as seven golden candlesticks, and her seven servants as seven stars in the right hand of the "Alpha and Omega," to reflect, not their own light, but that of the "SUN of Righteousness," as the literal stars do the rays of the sun in the firmament. - Rev. i. 12-20. But we are not to suppose that seven, as used in the scriptures, always brings to view that definite number. It is often used to show a perfect fullness or sufficiency, as in Zech. iii. 9, "Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes;" showing, as I suppose, the full, complete and perfect vision of the BRANCH, the

foundation stone; and, in Rev. v. 6, the Lamb was seen, "having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God." Here, I think, is evinced the perfection of his power in the horns, the perfection of his vision in the eyes, all to exhibit the perfection of the work of the Spirit. Again, to show the perfect and final overthrow of the enemies of God and his people, John saw seven angels with seven trumpets to sound the alarm at the approach of the terrible judgments of God. - Rev. viii. 2-6. A mighty angel came down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. - Rev. x. 3. To consummate the dreadful destruction another sign is seen in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues of God, in which is filled up the wrath of God. "And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen &c." And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. - Rev. xv. 1, 6, 7. But I am extending my remarks too far, and must look out for a lighting place. Volumes might be written on the subject. A cursory review and I shall have done. I have endeavored to elucidate, in my feeble way, some of the perfections of God in his works of creation, providence and grace. The entrance of sin into the world presents an opportunity for a sublime and conspicuous display of the latter. Therein is exemplified the counterpart of God's perfection. Man, the crowning piece of creation, engulfs himself and all his race into the dark abyss of sin, of imperfection. And, from the time he sets out on his dreary and wayward journey, whether by sea or land, imperfection trails in his wake or follows in his footsteps. The thoughts and imaginations of his heart are all imperfect - his words, his works, his ways, all, all imperfect. But God ordained to overrule all this to the development of his own glory, "to the praise of the glory of his grace;" for says David, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord;" and "surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain." The salvation of his people from their sins shall unfold the perfection of his grace; the destruction of his enemies by his power shall disclose the glory of his justice. O, my brethren, while we lament the imperfection of our depraved nature and OUR works, let us rejoice in the Lord and exult in HIS toward us, "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Still, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." That will be perfection enough for us. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." Now we know in part only, "but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part (or imperfect) shall be done away." Then, "let us go on unto perfection," for thither shall we all appear at last. Our Savior will appear the second time, without sin unto salvation. Yes, "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." That brightness, that divine effulgence shall dissipate the gloom, sweep away, as with angels' wings, all the rubbish of imperfection; therefore each one may

confidently say, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me; thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever; forsake not the works of thine own hands."

With unabated affection your brother in tribulation,

J. F. JOHNSON.

“God Is Not The God Of The Dead, But Of The Living.”

BROTHER BEEBE: - I believe the last request for my views on a portion of the scriptures, to be given through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, was made by brother Jasper Smith, of Illinois, in the eighth number, present volume, as follows:

"Will brother J. F. Johnson, of Kentucky, give his views, through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, on the words, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,' and oblige an inquirer after truth?"

The value of TRUTH is above any estimate that we place upon it, and I think that every one, who has any correct knowledge of it, should be willing to impart it to every honest inquirer after it. If I know the truth, I feel myself under obligations to do that, even at the hazard of exposing my own weakness. The precise words embraced in the request, are found in Matthew xxii. 32, and about the same in Mark xii. 27, and Luke xx. 38, all of which were spoken on the same occasion, and upon the same subject. In Romans, xiv. 9, it is said, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living." Taking these texts in a mere isolated sense, extracted from the subjects with which they are respectively connected, they would amount to almost if not altogether a contradiction; and hence the importance of ascertaining the subjects upon which these "holy men of God" wrote, as well as the characters addressed. Supposing that it may be as satisfactory to my brother, I will endeavor to consider the texts in connection. As the Lord is brought to view in one text as, being *not* the God of the dead, and in the other as being Lord *both* of the dead and living, and in order to show that there is no jargon in the two passages, it will be necessary to consider the different senses in which the word *dead* is used; for it is evidently used in the holy scriptures as signifying divers states or conditions, as dead, deceased; dead in sin, dead to sin, dead to the law, and according to the belief of the Sadducees, it meant complete annihilation: "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit."- Acts xxiii. 3. The first text under consideration is found in a conversation had between the Savior

and the Sadducees, in which the doctrine of the resurrection was concerned. They came to Jesus with the view of confounding him on that subject, and told him of seven brothers who successively married one woman, and asked him whose wife she would be in the resurrection, having no more exalted ideas of a resurrection than many have now, who talk and preach so much about meeting their wives, children, &c., in the world to come, and the terrible anguish, weeping, and lamentation that will be felt and realized among the just on seeing husbands, wives, children, &c., "thrown over the battlements among the damned." Such have no proper idea of the resurrection, and are no more consistent than those who, to this day, think it incredible that God should raise the dead, and therefore, retain the same old Saddusaic notion of non-resurrection. But, the Lord soon exploded this silly idea of the Sadducees, by referring them to what the Lord said to Moses concerning Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Those Sadducees, like all others who put on sheep's clothing to hide the wolf, professed to believe the scriptures. The case of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, therefore, was a complete *quietus* in the case; for they had been dead from one hundred and fifty to three hundred years, at least, before the Lord said to Moses, "I AM the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and if they died such a death as the Sadducees supposed, became extinct, completely reduced to nothing, how could He be their God in that case? Could He be the God of that which did not exist, in any sense? No! He is the God of the living. It amounted to proof positive by the scriptures which they professed to believe, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob still lived when God spake out of the burning bush to Moses, and that he was their God still. Then, "God is not the God of the dead (the extinct) but of the living." It appears from the best description we can get of the doctrine of the Sadducees, that they believed that man was entirely material, soul, body, spirit, and all; and, of course, when he died he sank into nonentity, like the brute, and that was the end of him. Consequently, there were no future rewards or punishments, as the modern Universalists believe now. All this would sap the very foundation of the christian's hope at once, and Christ exposes the fallacy of the whole theory, assuring us at the same time that, although our bodies may sleep in the dust for a while, we still live, and He is our God still. Thus, in the scriptures, those holding erroneous sentiments are frequently addressed as though their sentiments were true, for the sake of refuting them, and so the Lord addressed the Sadducees respecting "the dead" according to the Saddusaic notion, which meant nonentity, and so effectually did He silence them "that they durst not ask Him any more questions at all." I presume that this brief view of the first text under consideration will enable my brother and others who may consider it worth their perusal, to get my idea that God is not the God of the dead that die as the Sadducees contended, like the brute, and become extinct, but of the living, whether they live in this world or in another, or better, as did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The text in Romans xiv. 9, presents death in its true sense, not as annihilating or reducing us to nothing, but merely as dissolving our earthly house of this tabernacle, that we may "be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," and

"that mortality might be swallowed up of life." "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." For what end? To the end that whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. Is this not a pleasant consideration? "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." It is no more certain that he liveth unto God than it is that his children, who are born of God, do live and shall live forever to Him who died for them. "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." - 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Is it so, that Christ both died for us and rose again that we might live to Him? How the thought should incite all our devotional powers to praise, extol, thank and reverence His holy name for such surpassing and incalculable favors! O, did he die? Yes! "CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS," and, in that death, He did "REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY." That fact should inspire our hearts with a mournful joy. But the wondrous and transporting scene did not end there. He *rose*. Let our joys now rise to ecstasy! Our songs swell to thrilling notes of rapture at the thought! The *fact* that it was impossible for death to hold him! There was too much POWER there for the sepulchre to hold. Like the withes with which Samson was bound, and which he brake as a thread of tow when it touched the fire, He severed the fetters of death, and rose! ROSE! Graced with conquest! Bearing the palms of everlasting victory!

"Death could not hold our conquering Head,
And death must therefore yield the palm;
Lord of the living and the dead,
We hail thy victory! Great I AM."

Died to redeem, rose to revive, and lives to intercede for his people. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death." Here is a most astonishing display of "His divine power" in overruling all the wily maneuvering of the arch adversary in the introduction of sin into the world, with all its train of direful consequences, to the development of His own glory, and the good of his elect, the most sublime display of the supreme power of God exercised in behalf of His fallen and otherwise lost children; the most amazing outburst of love and mercy that the imagination could conceive of. How could eternal love, reigning grace, and boundless mercy, ever have had so conspicuous a display, had not sin entered into the world, and death by sin? How could many be made righteous by the obedience of one man, (Christ,) had not many been made sinners by the disobedience of one. May we not then sing with the poet?

"What else is evil but the shade,
By wisdom in the picture laid?
To make his love arise and show,
Its brightest glory bore below.

Nor yet could sin forgiving grace,
Among all the creatures find a place;
While all was good no room could be,
For mercy's aid to misery."

O! my dear brother, brothers, sisters, all, while we live may we live, really and manifestly to Him, and when we die, die to Him who died for us, and rose again. Rejoice then, that He is "Lord both of the dead and living;" and, therefore, not the pomposity, wealth or splendor, bewitching snares of this life; not tribulation or distress, persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, destructive missiles, not death itself, terrific monster, last but vanquished enemy, shall dispossess the Lord of the dead and living of his heritage, for whether we live or die we are the Lord's. Then let us chant with the redeemed hosts,

"Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry,
To be exalted thus;
Worthy the Lamb, our lips reply,
For He was slain for us.

Jesus is worthy to receive,
Honor and power divine;
And blessings more than we can give,
Be, Lord, forever thine."

Brother Beebe, since commencing the foregoing communication, I discover in the last number of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES that has come to hand, a short communication from brother William Jackson, of Michigan. After speaking of a publication of mine in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, of June 1st, on the subject of "The Prodigal Son," he says:

"I would be gratified much if he will give his views, through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, on that part found in Luke xv. 22. The particular point of inquiry is, whether the ROBE spoken of is the robe of righteousness in which the saints are to be presented spotless before the throne, and if so, what have the SERVANTS to do in putting it on the prodigal?"

In my attempt to answer the queries, I beg leave to refer my brother to some expressions in that article. On page eighty-four, and in the fourth column, I have said: "A parable (proper) is similitude to something to be illustrated by it, and of course, in its general features must present an analogy to the antitype; but it is not to be supposed that all the particulars of the antitype must have precisely corresponding lineaments with what is to be explained by it," and referred to the parable by which Nathan reproved David, to substantiate the idea. The brethren, by these extracts, will discover that I regard the whole matter of this parable, as well as others, as symbols or illustrations of something else, but portraying their antitype in their general features. Therefore, in answer to the question, "Whether the robe spoken of is the robe of righteousness in which the saints are to be presented spotless before the throne?" I answer, No. But suppose that, whether it was a real or supposed one, it was typical of that spotless robe in which the saints are dressed. Isaiah has said, "HE HATH CLOTHED ME with the robe of righteousness." If we may particularize on all the minute parts of the parable, I suppose the servants of God are all aware that they can do nothing more in putting on the robe than by way of manifestation to those who the Lord has taught to see the folly of trusting in their own righteousness, which is comparable to the "spider's web," and "filthy rags." All such are made to feel the necessity of a more durable and decent covering; and when the faithful servant appropriately applies the righteousness of Christ, it will fit that individual for whom it was prepared, and who is prepared to receive it to a T; and the faithful servant dare not apply it to any other, or if he does, he casts his pearls before swine. Now, I have hastily submitted some of my reflections on the subject proposed, but whether the mere *putting on* the robe (on the prodigal) or the ring on his hand, or the shoes on his feet, was intended to evince some spiritual import, I know not. Some of the most tiresome preaching that I have listened to from Old School Baptists has been when they have taken up a figure and labored to make something out of each particle attached to, or connected with the figure, point to some remarkable spiritual object. For instance, one takes up "a reed shaken by the wind," and begins with the *root* and spiritualizes that; then the stalk, next the wrapper or envelope, then the blade, connected with it, and so on till all is spiritualized. I do think that I have heard figures distorted in this way out of all shape, stretched beyond all that was designed to be conveyed by them, and perhaps I may have been engaged to some extent in a similar speculation while penning the foregoing remarks. Others, however, no doubt, see farther into these matters than I do, and should let their light shine. Having now tried to reply to all the requests that I have found in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES for views, this, with all the rest, is kindly submitted to the judgment which, I trust, may have been and still may be formed by a careful comparison with the scriptures, and may the Lord open our understanding that we may understand them.

Most affectionately,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Ezekiel 17:22-24.

Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, July, 1863.

BROTHER BEEBE, BRETHREN AND SISTERS: - I have been traveling and removing so much within the last ten or twelve months past, that I am far behind hand in complying with the different requests made through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES for my views on portions of scriptures. Within the above named space I was absent over six months at one time, and removed twice. The last time, however, was only from one part of Lawrenceburg to another, where we are more comfortably situated, feel more permanently settled, more like I am where I should be, than I have for years past; and located where I can serve four churches, go to and return from each in one day, except one, which is about twenty miles distant, with a good turnpike road all the way. O that I could serve the Lord's children as I should. Ought we to have any higher aspirations on this earth? That is, his acceptable service. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

I think that the last request for my views in the past volume was made by sister Martha E. Price, of Iowa, and reads as follows:

"Will Elder J. F. Johnson, of Kentucky, please give his views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, on Ezekiel xvii. 22-24, and oblige a little sister if a sister at all?"

The connection reads: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it in an high mountain and eminent: in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it, and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit and be a goodly cedar, and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." Perhaps none of the holy writers have written in a more highly figurative style than has the prophet Ezekiel. He depicts the kings of Babylon and Egypt, the then perhaps most elevated nations of the earth, as to earthly power and splendor, under the similitude of two great eagles, the former of which "came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the high cedar. He cropped off the top of his young twigs and carried it into a land of traffic; he set it in a city of merchants." I suppose that "the high cedar" represents the Jewish nation; "the highest branch" the king of the Jews; the "young twigs" the king's seed, princes, &c. This highest branch and twigs were planted in a "city of merchants," (Babylon,) where "it grew and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, (the king of Babylon,) and the roots thereof were

under him." "There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers; and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him." By reference to the foregoing part of this prophecy, we discover that the Lord had taken this people, the Jews, when they were small, and made them a great nation. He gave them national laws to govern them, ceremonial ones to regulate their worship. A very positive command in those laws was, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The blessings and immunities of the land which the Lord gave them, and in which they were so abundantly favored, were guaranteed to them on conditions, such as the following: "If ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments, and do them, then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruits," &c. "And if (on the other hand,) ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant, I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies; they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you."- See Leviticus xxvi. But they made void the law of God by their traditions, set up their graven and standing images, not only before their eyes, but "set up their idols in their hearts," imagining gods, which are as bad as any, and which we fear are worshiped to an alarming extent at this time; and for this cause, this great eagle, the king of Babylon, was sent to take their king, their princes, and seed of the land, and plant them in "a land of traffic." This was a righteous retribution from God, the legitimate fruits of their idolatry. It had greatly fallen upon them as a withering curse, for they had been faithfully forewarned. To avert this righteous judgment, this vine did bend her roots and shoot forth her branches toward the great eagle, the king of Egypt. In other words, to avoid the righteous retribution that had fallen upon them from the Lord, they applied to the king of Egypt for deliverance. But it was vain for them to think of escaping the rod of the Almighty by this stratagem. He says, "It shall not prosper." A fearful warning this to a nation which, having been blessed as was that people, who turns to the worship of idols, whether set up in forms before the eyes of the people, or in their hearts or imaginations. But, after exhibiting a complete failure in the conditional theory "for our learning," the Lord interposes, and tells what HE will do. *"Thus saith the Lord God, I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it."* This is the commencement of the connection on which my views are requested. We have, "Thus saith the Lord God," in the beginning, and may rest assured that what follows are stubborn, immutable facts. What are the facts in the case? The first is: "I will also take of the highest branch." Mark, he does not say he will take the highest branch, as did the king of Babylon, but *of* the highest. Now, David in his day was the highest branch of the high cedar; but he does not take David, but that which was *of* David. The allusion is evidently to Christ, the Preserver, Redeemer, and Savior of Israel, who "was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh." Here then was THE TOP OF THE HIGHEST BRANCH of the high cedar. The Lord says, "I will make him, my first-born, HIGHER than the kings of

the earth." And, "Thou hast anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows." This "tender one" then is cropped off from the top of his young twigs. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant." This word *tender* is to be taken as being "compassionate, anxious for others' good, mild," &c. "And will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent." This high and eminent mountain is characteristic of the church, according to Micah iv. 1, and Isaiah ii. 2, "But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills." This height is not to be considered a mere local position, but one of exalted excellence. Those mountains, above which this is exalted, may illustrate religious organizations, whether ones among the Jews, or modern ones among the Gentiles. What mountain is to be compared with this in elevated uprightness? By one offering this mountain is "perfected forever." "The King's daughter is all glorious; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework." And again: "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jerusalem; terrible as an army with banners." No spot, wrinkle, or any such thing, is to be found upon her. Then, is it not "an high mountain and eminent?" Yes, she stands majestic, eminent, prominent as "a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid; whose glory may be seen afar off, and many come to the brightness of her rising." The climax of her glory is the illustrious HEAD that is "set" upon this mountain. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. - Psalm ii. 6. There is the glory that may be seen afar off. The effulgent beams irradiating from this gloriously brilliant Head sheds its lustrous brightness over all the mountain, causing her to look forth as the morning, "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Ah! my sister, this tender one, this top of the twigs, set upon the holy hill of Zion, is "Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." Not only on, but "In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it." Would HE, whose sublime majesty commands the reverence of all the heavenly hosts, will he take up his residence with us; whose glory is the embellishment of heaven, expansive as its circumference, extensive as eternity? O, what condescension! This is "IMMANUEL, which being interpreted is GOD WITH US." Sing praises to the Lord that dwelleth in Zion; declare among the people his doings." O, may we all sing in the fervent sincerity of our hearts,

"I love her gates, I love the road,
The church adorned with grace,
Stands like a palace built for God,
To show his lovely face."

This planting of the holy one in Mount Zion unfolds a deep and profound "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." This is what renders the King's daughter *all glorious within*. God has said he will plant this "tender" or compassionate one in the mountain of Israel, and when this is done, we have a "new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Thence comes the tocsin and inauguration of war: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." Severe *may* be the conflict, but certain *must* be victory. "For which cause we faint not; for though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." "And it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar." Now permit me to remark here that there has been a controversial point between those who claim to be Old School Baptists, that I think this expression ought to settle. The controversy has been upon the subject of what is called, The New Birth. While some have contended that the birth consists in a mere *change* of the natural man, or, of some part of that man at least, others have urged that it was a new production in that man, originally and primitively different from the natural man, in nature and in practice. But, we should consider that a birth does not change the *nature* of anything born. We admit that the circumstances and practice of things born exhibit a change after the birth, but these are consequences of, or resulting from the birth, not the birth itself. Now to the text: Christ is the Son of God; "The only begotten of the Father." The Father has said he will plant this tender one *in* Israel, (the church,) and that "it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit." Can language be more explicit, the allusion more clear, that these *boughs* are the immediate, direct and exclusive production of this plant? The birth then is not a change produced by this plant, or the planter, but as actual an offspring from it, as boughs of a tree are from the first implantation, or as the branches are from the vine. Hence says Christ, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." But, the Lord says further that this plant, or tree, as we may call it, shall "bear fruit." The fruit then is a production also of the tree, but it *appears* on the boughs that grow out of the tree. The boughs though, in order to bear fruit, must still remain attached to and inseverable from the tree or vine. Therefore, "The true Vine" has said, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." The fruit produced is of the same nature as the bearing stalk. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" it is therefore spiritual fruit, or in other words, "The fruit of the Spirit (which) is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law."- Gal. v. 22, 23. This is excellent fruit; very different from "the works of the flesh;" a concise catalogue of which we have in the preceding verses of this chapter, and which are lawless ones. This then is a goodly cedar, for it bears good fruit, and the tree is known by its fruit. Love stands at the head of the list, and

"Love is the sweetest bud that blows,

Its beauty never dies."

Also,

"Peace flows like a river from Jesus the fount,
And gladdens the lovely abode of the mount."

Then,

"Joy spreads from the threshold of God and the Lamb,
To the praise of the great, the majestic I AM."

All the rest flow from the same compassionate, exhaustless source, all necessary for the health, comfort and well being of the family. All and each of the boughs, or branches, should be careful to maintain those good works, and we are glad that God has ordained that they should. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." And again: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Every unbiased lover of good works will rejoice in the foreordination of God, for it secures to each one the good works, and the only good works that ever were or ever will be acceptable in the sight of God. "And under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow thereof shall they dwell." This latter, or closing part of the connection on which my sister has requested my ideas, is simply to show the peace, quietude, safety and repose of all who are brought under the hallowed dominion of the influence of the church. "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation." Under that influence, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together," &c. Fowls, however, are seldom, if ever, used in the scriptures to represent any part of the church. They are more generally used to illustrate mere nominal and false or flighty professors. Hence, Job says, "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen." Again, the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of the mustard tree, but still they constituted none of it, but were rather cumbersome while there. Birds are very fit emblems of airy professors of religion, who change so frequently to suit the times, seasons and circumstances that surround them, but illy calculated to exhibit the church as exemplified by the permanent standing cedar, with its rock-hugging roots. Still, all these may rest under its shadow, it will hurt none of them. - See Gal. vi. 10. I have now endeavored to comply with the request of sister Price, as well as I can, and now assure her that this long delay has not been the result of disrespect, or indifference to her solicitation. With your concurrence, brother Beebe, this

communication is respectfully submitted to her consideration, and also to the judgment of others, who may notice it.

Your brother, as ever,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Luke 19:10.

Lawrenceburg, July 22, 1863.

BROTHER BEEBE: - In the sixth number of the current volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, I find the following request:

"Will Eld. J. F. Johnson, of Kentucky, give his views on Luke xix. 10, and oblige an inquirer after truth?"

The verse reads thus: "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." This is a very plain declaration, and conscious as I am of my insufficiency to do justice to the plainest portion of holy writ, I will, nevertheless, try to "oblige an inquirer after truth." As Jesus passed through Jericho there was a man named Zaccheus, the chief among the publicans, or tax collectors, who sought to see him; and because he was "little of stature," and, I suppose, could not see over the crowd, ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree. When Jesus came he called him down, saying, "Today I must abide at thy house." He came down and received him joyfully. The multitude murmured, saying he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner. Just like the Arminians are yet - think that the Savior should have nothing to do with men until they cease to be sinners. Perfectly in accordance with the theory that teaches people that they are to be saved by their own good works. Zaccheus was rich, but how soon was his love of lucre lessened when he joyfully received the Savior! He was ready to distribute half his goods to the poor, and, if he had wronged any man by false accusation, would restore four-fold. Gladly receiving Jesus is, and should be, followed by honesty and uprightness. All such recipients should show their faith by their works. Jesus said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." "For (in consideration of a sonship with Abraham) the Son of Man is come," &c. Whether this was a son of Abraham according to the flesh I am not prepared to say. Perhaps not, as the Jews so readily branded him with the epithet, "sinner," a term usually applied by them to the

Gentiles. He was doubtless a son of Abraham according to Paul's definition. He says, "They which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham." And again, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. iii. 7, 29. At any rate, salvation had *come* to his house. All the seeking for salvation that work-mongers talk so much about is not worth a groat. But, when Jesus comes to poor sinners with it, then it is a priceless boon. The dear Redeemer does not come to make overtures of salvation upon terms and conditions, but says, "My own arm brought salvation." "*The Son of Man is come.*" Where did he come from? He says, "I came down from heaven." "Ah!" says a would-be-called old fashioned Baptist, "as God he came down from heaven, not the *man* Christ Jesus. He did not exist as man until he was born of the virgin Mary. It is unreasonable to suppose that the man existed in heaven. It could not be." Yes it could, for he DID thus exist in heaven, and come down from there to do his Father's will. Is it not strange that men will come right out and deny a fact that is confirmed in the scriptures as positively as language can state it, and by words, too, so simple and plain that they are not susceptible of a misunderstanding? What are some of those words? Here they are: "No man hath ascended up to heaven but HE THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, even THE SON OF MAN which is in heaven." And again: "What and if ye shall see THE SON OF MAN ascend up where HE WAS BEFORE." Paul reasons on the case thus: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." That is proof, clear enough for those who wish to know the truth.

"Who is this that comes from far,
Clad in garments dipped in blood;
Strong, triumphant traveler,
Is he man, or is he God?

I that speak in righteousness,
Son of God and man I am;
Mighty to redeem your race,
Jesus is your Savior's name."

What did he come for? "To seek and to save that which was lost." Will he fully and finally accomplish the work? He will, for his counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure. The mission of the Son of Man is very explicitly spoken of here. How many believe it is as it is, without any ifs and buts, without adding to or taking from it? Now, suppose we should find just below this text one saying, The Son of Man is come to beseech men to seek him, and to offer terms by which they may be saved, if they comply with those terms, and thereby make a way possible for all to be saved. How strange these

two passages would look side by side, and yet no doubt a large majority of the religionists of our day would prefer such an interpolation to the genuine text. If there was a bible gotten up precisely in accordance with the present working theory of religion, there never was a book that was a more complete counterplot to another than that would be to the present bible. In it we should have the resolutions, works, offerings and righteousness of men, opposed to the purposes, work, blood and righteousness of Christ to save us. Then would come our doing, holding out faithful, &c., to keep us, instead of the power of God. There, too, we should have evil for good and good for evil, darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. See Isaiah v. 20. That class of religionists may talk about a translation of the Bible loud and long, but that will never answer their purpose. They must have another book, expressing radically different sentiments. A "translation" is simply taking a sentiment as expressed by one language and expressing the same sentiment in another or different tongue. One with half an eye, therefore, may readily discover that a simple translation of the Bible will never reach the case. "To seek that which was lost" is a part of his mission that he has never assigned to another, until he first finds them and sets his seal or mark upon them. When that is done we may look for them, and when we discover the mark (circumcision of the heart) then we recognize them, and should we even find them previously to that, we should not know them. He has called upon his people, too, to seek him after he has found and vitalized them; but while they are dead in sin, and without strength, such a requisition would be wholly superfluous. This text perfectly accords with the general sentiment expressed in the scriptures on the subject. It is said in Ezekiel xxxiii. 11-16, "Behold I, even I will both search my sheep and seek them out," and so on to the sixteenth verse, where he says, "I will seek that which was lost and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick." But he came to *save* as well as seek. The "discipline" of a certain church, no, the discipline of a certain *society*, says; Question: What is the duty of the preacher? Answer: To save souls. And again, to the preacher: You have nothing to do but to save souls; therefore spend and be spent in that work, &c. If they "save souls" they are saviors. Away with such saviors! Poor, little things - no, nothings, less than nothing, and vanity; for the Son of Man is come to save. There is one that is able to save. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. All power in heaven and earth is there. There was no more certainty in his coming than that he would finish the work that he came to do. So far as the flesh or temple in which he dwelt was concerned he was "made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law." To accomplish that he must meet that law by obeying its commandments, walking in its precepts and suffering its penalty. He, therefore, in the prosecution of that important work, toiled assiduously while encountering all the opposition that incarnate fiends could use, all the malice, hatred, revenge, calumny, insult and cruelty that they could heap upon him. Yet, in the endurance of all this, he prosecuted the momentous work with a purpose unmoved, with a zeal unabating, with an endurance

and a forbearance before unknown. "Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?" "The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ." Many were his foes, but mighty was his arm. No penalty of the law too heavy for him to bear, no cruelty of enemies too severe for him to endure, no debt against his bride too immense for him to cancel. In the garden of Gethsemane, when pressed under the weight of our sins and the wrath of a sin-avenging and violated law, the gloomy billows of trouble went over, the poignant arrows of grief pierced, and the terrible throes of anguish wrung his holy soul. Then to Calvary - but here my language must fail to depict the terrible, bloody, ghastly, suffering scene of Golgotha! But, while we mourn over the tragical scene, there are two reasons why we should rejoice, too. First, he suffered for our sins. Secondly, he was able to bear the enormous weight when it would have crushed all his children down into remediless ruin. Thus he could perform in a few hours what men and angels would have failed to do in time or eternity, and when it was completed immaculate lips exclaimed, "IT IS FINISHED!"

"He dies! the Friend of sinners dies!
Lo! Salem's daughters weep around,
A solemn darkness veils the skies,
A sudden trembling shakes the ground!

And did he bleed, for sinners bleed?
And could the sun behold the deed?
No! he withdrew his sickening ray,
And darkness veiled the morning day!"

But he has come to seek and save "THAT which was lost." This word *that* is a definite one. There is a specialty expressed by it. The church, while in a state of warfare here, sustains two relationships, one spiritual and holy, the other natural and sinful. Each one of the whole fraternity possesses alike these two natures, brought to view in the scriptures as two men. Zaccheus was one of that progeny, a son of Abraham, according to Gal. iii. 7, 29, possessing in common with the rest an "earthly" and a "heavenly" man. Now it is *that* earthy man that the Son of Man came to seek and to save from the curse of the law, redeem to God by his blood. Permit me, while on this part of the subject, to disabuse the minds of some who have been told that some of us (including myself) preach that Christ came to save a set of holy, spiritual children that were never lost. This monstrosity, too, has been hatched by and crawled out from some who have gone out from us, because they were not of us, but still assume to be of the old order of Baptists, but their more appropriate name is anti-union Baptists, if we may apply the name Baptists to them at all. I never heard any one advance such an idea. It is simply an absurdity, a fabrication from first to last; and I would fain hope that nothing worse than ignorance has originated it.

That earthy man had "gone astray like a lost sheep" and was lost, wandered "far off," "being alienated from the life of God," &c., but there has never one of them yet gone so far as to be beyond the scan of the all-seeing eye of the good Shepherd. They were his before they took their desperate plunge in their earthly head. His Father gave them to him, and he had as lawful a title to them as ever a shepherd had for sheep, and therefore the right to redeem, seek and save them, which work he will surely consummate, and crown the climax in the final release of the last one, to the glory of his own name and their everlasting felicity. Although he abhorred the sin, he loved the sinner still, and gave himself for it. Was not this a wonder of wonders? What great and marvelous wonders he may have wrought elsewhere we cannot say, (for nothing seems too great for him to do,) but surely this world was never the theatre of a more marvelous work!

"He formed the sun, fair fount of light,
The moon and stars to rule the night;
But night and stars, and moon and sun,
Are little works compared with One.

He rolled the seas and spread the skies,
Made valleys sink and mountains rise,
The meadows clothed with native green,
And bade the rivers roll between.

But what are seas, or skies, or hills,
Or verdant vales, or gliding rills,
To wonders man was made to prove,
The wonders of redeeming love!"

It is truly astonishing and marvelous in the extreme that Christ should come,

"To suffer in the traitor's place,
To die for man, surprising grace!"

Yet such is the fact, "that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures." Yes, astonishing as it may seem, he bent his downward course from his residence, where, wrapt in unstained glory, which he had with the Father before the world was, beyond the reach of woe and misery; still, for the unparalleled love he had for poor sinners, traitors, "he became a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief," while we hid our faces from him; but,

"He, came to seek, he came to save,
He came to triumph o'er the grave."

He has done all that, and seated upon a white horse, emblem of purity and power, with a crown upon his head, fit emblem of a royal victor, a bow in his hand, with which to carry dismay and discomfiture into the hosts of anti-christ, and thus equipped, "he went forth conquering and to conquer." Ah! my brethren, with this triumphant Leader to marshal the hosts, lead the van, and bring up the rearward myriads that he came to *seek and to save*, we shall weather the storm, skim over the billows and outride the hurricanes that threaten us here. He is "traveling in the greatness of his strength." There is majesty in his name, might in his arm, but mercy in his march for all the redeemed. The Lord's people, by the death, resurrection and ascension of the Redeemer, was not only to be saved from the curse of the law and the condemning power of sin, but from all its annoying consequences. This deliverance is still progressing to a glorious and happy termination. Not only "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son," but saved from all the persecutions of outside enemies, and the more distressing annoyances of indwelling ones. The un-compromising war that is incessantly waged between the flesh and the spirit, blasting our comforts, bewildering our hopes, subjecting our faith to the severest trials, increasing our misery, cultivating our doubts and augmenting our fears, must all end well, for this conflict is drifting to no uncertain termination. Tribulation is an unavoidable portion of the saints, of this world, but Jesus has overcome the world.

"Then let not all this terrify,
Pursue the narrow path;
Look to the Lord with steadfast eye,
And fight the fight of faith."

The Captain of our salvation has grasped and holds the palm of victory, and all his shall ere long be seen with "palms in their hands," sharing his triumph. Then let us, while here, sing with David, "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners." For David also says, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." Under its ample folds we may fearlessly face each foe, and by-and-by we shall unite our voices, all in harmony and sweet melody, and chant the song of Moses and the Lamb. Moses sang once, and we shall all ere long sing anti-typically, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song; he is become my salvation."

The Son of Man is come,

To seek and save the lost;
Triumphantly he'll bear us home,
He's met and paid the cost.

Most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Matthew 25. The Talents.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., November, 1863.

BROTHER BEEBE: - My views are again solicited on a parable, and one that I know not that I understand. Limited as my views are on the subject proposed, I cannot say that I have none, and will therefore try to comply with the request of my sister as well as I can. In the 18th number of the current volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES it is said:

"Will Eld. J. F. Johnson of Kentucky please give his views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on the parable of the servants to whom the talents were given, especially the one that hid his talent in the earth? This parable is recorded in the 25th chapter of Matthew."

MALINDA JEFFERSON.

I have heard considerable preaching about the individual who received the one talent, but not by any one who I thought preached the truth. All the work-mongers that I have heard on the subject, (and I believe they are all I have heard on it) conclude that every man has one talent given him, which they generally call "the light of nature," and that, by improving, they might add to it, and receive the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant," &c. But this accords with the general theory of salvation "by works of righteousness which we have done," which we know to be all wrong, all a delusive fabrication. If the one talent is a talent of nature, the two would be two talents of nature, and the five, five talents of nature; making all natural; no grace, no spirit in the case. Still in harmony with the working theory; for one talent does not differ from two or five, in *kind*; the difference is only in a valuable consideration. Five talents are worth more than one, still they are no better in kind. If then, the one talent is "the light of nature," the two would illustrate that light in a two-fold, and the five in a five-fold degree. Admitting that to be the case, the parable would teach us that the poor fellow having the light of nature in but one degree would receive nothing, while he that has it in two degrees would

receive double, and, likewise, he that has five. Then, "the wise and prudent," from whom the Lord has hid these things, (of the Spirit) would receive all, and the weak, or babes, to whom they are revealed, nothing. The rich would be filled with good things, and the poor sent empty away. All in harmony with the Arminian theory, yet all the complete counterplot to the truth as it is revealed in the scriptures.

My views on the subject, however, are very different from the foregoing ones, and as mine are solicited, I will try to give them. I do not think that the parable under consideration is applicable to mere individuals. My opinion is that the character who was said to receive the one talent, (as that is the one that my sister requests me to speak of particularly) is a good exponent of the Jewish nation, and the one talent indicative of the scriptures; "because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Those oracles constituted a rich gift that the Lord bestowed on that people. Hence Moses says, "For what nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" But what advancement did they make upon the rich endowment? Said Stephen, when they were about to stone him, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And have slain them that shewed before the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Instead of regulating their worship by the instruction that the Lord gave them, they taught for doctrines the commandments of men; and instead of regulating their conduct by the laws that God had given them, they transgressed the commandment of God by their traditions. Thus, amid the sable shades of the doctrines and commandments of men, and the opaque lowerings of earthly tradition, they hid the talent that was given them from heaven.

Although I think the Jews as a nation were particularly exemplified by the individual who hid his lord's money in the earth, yet as the theory is so congenial with the aspiring nature of depraved man, it is not marvelous that the Gentiles, after the scriptures had obtained a respectable notoriety, should eagerly grasp the monstrous hallucination and enlarge upon the theory, that the purposes and works of God are not sufficient in themselves to accomplish the great work of salvation; but to aid in its consummation, earthly inventions, earthly means, earthly instrumentalities, must be brought into requisition to change, if possible, the truth of God into a lie, to hide beneath the dark shroud of those earthly instrumentalities, or conceal among the murky mists of the doctrines and commandments of men the living witnesses (the Old and New Testaments) that God has given for a testimony to Zion.

The Mother of Harlots steps forward in the execution of the nefarious work, and among the first of her diabolical deeds was to destroy the ordinance of baptism, significant emblem, appropriate directory, not only to the burial and resurrection of the

body of the Lord Jesus, but also to cause the weary pilgrim to look forward to his final resting place, his "sleep in Jesus," and the luminous dawn of the resurrection morn, when the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead shall quicken this mortal body, and change and fashion it like his glorious body. This impressive ordinance was changed into the unmeaning practice of sprinkling unconscious babies or graceless adults, although originally designed for the burial by baptism of his believing children only. Then comes up the unhallowed idea of the "conversion of the world," and "holy crusades" are set on foot to accomplish the abomination under the lead of blood-thirsty men by the blood-shedding sword.

The heart sickens while retrospectively the bloody scenes that trailed in the wake of this earthly, sensual, and we may say devilish idea, which scenes were too numerous as well as too black for this communication. But I will here add, that the unscriptural notion of converting the world by the instrumentality of men has been transmitted from the *mother* down to her Protestant daughters, and they have endeavored to carry on the unscriptural work, it is true, by less violent, but more subtle means, yet equally unauthorized by the divine code. The very idea of "christianizing the world" by those unholy and anti-scriptural means is repugnant to the true sense of Christianity and belligerent to the spirit of the Bible. All the machinations and organizations that have been gotten up to consummate the illegitimate object, by whatever possible names they may be called, whether Missionary Society, Bible Society, or any other society, with all the fine spun arguments and apparent zeal and sanctity that can be used, and however they may charm the proud hearts, and however pleasant the sound to the itching ears of graceless professors of religion, while they are unauthorized by the divine record, are earthy, and only calculated to hide the scriptures in the earth - conceal them amid the rubbish of those measures. It is said of the character who hid the talent, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Retributive judgment commensurate with the sentence was meted out to the Jewish nation to the uttermost, who remain in outer darkness to this day; and the same doom awaits all who persist in a similar course. The parable may teach us that the natural man, although he may have every faculty that learning, talent, money or missionism can afford him, will not receive the things of the Spirit, cannot know them, and therefore will make no advances, no progress in rendering true or acceptable service to God. There must be a gift bestowed in addition to the scriptures, and then we may look for advancement; not until then.

Having used so much ink and paper in treating upon the character on which my sister desired my views especially, I will endeavor briefly to notice the other two.

I suppose that the servant who had the two talents given him, was designed to represent the believing Jews, and the additional gift bestowed upon them was life from the dead, as nothing short of that will quicken or accelerate the dead to action, or qualify any to make the least progression in the service of God. The bestowal of that gift enabled

them to render to God the things that were his, and therefore give unto him the praise and glory that is due to his exalted name.

But the Gentile christians were blessed with still additional gifts, for they were not only to receive their brethren of the circumcision into everlasting habitations, but the different gifts that were requisite for the edifying of the body of Christ. Hence I conclude that he who received five talents was a representative of them. I think that the sequel of the parable fully justifies this conclusion, for it was said of the unprofitable servant, "Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." Was not the oracles of God taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles? When Paul preached the word of God to the unbelieving Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, they were, filled with envy, spake against the things that were spoken by him, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles; for so hath God commanded us," &c. As the oracles of God were to be taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles, as the believing Jews were to find an asylum among them, and as the church of God, the ground and pillar of the truth was to be perpetuated there, it was necessary that a larger portion of gifts should be conferred upon them for the comfort and edification of the body of Christ. In order to this five particular ones are specified by the apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, iv. 10, in which are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The Gentiles being thus blessed with gifts, have every necessary qualification to enable them to add to their faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, brotherly kindness, charity, and all the graces that adorn the christian profession.

Dear brethren and sisters, if the Lord has thus blessed us with rich gifts from the store of his abounding grace and mercy, let us not be idle, but diligent in adding to our profession and faith those necessary and useful appendages that we may be neither barren nor unfruitful in the work of the Lord.

With but little light on the subject, and that little (if I have any) perhaps obscured by the intrusion of other business that has frequently called me away, so that I have had to write by piecemeal, with sometimes long intervening intervals, I have tried to comply with the request of sister Jefferson, who I hope, with others that may look over the production, will carefully compare it with the word of truth, and approve or disapprove as that word may dictate. But, brother Beebe, it is first submitted entirely to your disposal.

Permit me to say, in conclusion, that since I came here our meetings in this vicinity have generally been pleasant and interesting; our houses when the weather was good have been crowded to overflowing, and then sometimes containing but little over half the attendants. The congregations have been apparently very attentive, too, and within the last few months I have had the pleasure of baptizing five of the Lord's dear children, who gave to the churches very satisfactory evidence of the power of reigning grace in

delivering them from the power of darkness, and translating them into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and we are expecting and hoping that others will soon follow the commendable example that they have set. We desire to feel both humble and grateful to the Lord for the tokens of his favor conferred upon us in view of all our unworthiness.

Though unworthy, permit me to remain your brother in the Lord,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Mark 13:13,14,19,20.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., December 24, 1863.

"Will brother J. F. Johnson, of Kentucky, give through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES his views on Mark xiii. 13,14,19 and 20, more especially on the words, 'But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, [let him that readeth understand,] and oblige your brother in bonds, if a brother at all?"

HENRY RICHARDS.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I find in the last received number of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES (Vol. 31, No. 23) the above request, and, as I have a little leisure, will try to accommodate my brother, if you think what I write worth publishing. The whole connection reads, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains ... for in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days."

It will appear by referring to the preceding part of the chapter in which this language is recorded that one of the disciples called the attention of the Savior to the magnificent buildings that composed the temple at Jerusalem; and the reply was, "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" The Lord then warned them to beware of deceivers, that would

come in his name, and told them of fearful signs that should precede the dreadful catastrophe, among which were wars, earthquakes, famines and other troubles, but these were only the beginning of sorrows. He further informed them that they should be delivered up to councils, beaten in the synagogues, brought before rulers and kings for his sake for a testimony against their persecutors, upon whom the indignation of his wrath was soon to be poured out to the uttermost; informing them, however, that the gospel must first be preached among all nations. Let me remark here, that it is evident from the preceding part of this chapter that Jesus was telling of signs that should be developed - circumstances should transpire before the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem. The commandments in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, Mark xvi. 15, and Luke xxiv. 46, 47, correspond precisely with the text just quoted, all of which were literally complied with by the apostles to whom the command was given *antecedently* to that destruction, as is clearly shown in Col. i. 23, wherein Paul assures us that this gospel *was preached to every creature under heaven*, and also in Mark xvi. 20, where it is said, "And they (the apostles) went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following." Those commandments were given to *the apostles* and to none others; therefore all the carping and caviling of Arminians about preaching the gospel to every creature is but the result of an ignorance of the scriptures. Not one, nor the whole of them combined, ever have or ever will contribute one mite in compliance with the requisitions contained in those texts, nor has it been required of any save the apostles, and of course not of work-mongers, who have neither part nor lot in the matter. After informing the disciples that when they were led and delivered up the Holy Ghost should dictate what they should say, Jesus told them of the fratricidal course that some would pursue, and then says, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved."

From this language we may judge of the turpitude, malignity and depravity of sinful man and his native opposition to all that is good. It is a sad reflection that nothing will incite and stir up his hatred to a higher pitch than native goodness. It is a fact too palpable and undeniable that nothing increases the intensity of that hatred more than a spurious religion, one built upon the theory of works, the works of depraved man for the salvation of sinners. The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, possesses an aptitude in training the minds of graceless professors to hate the truth that is truly astonishing. Almost all the persecutions, perhaps ninety-nine percentage of them that have raged against the saints in all ages, have been set on foot and propelled onward by professors of religion, who, having a form of godliness, deny the power thereof. One making no pretensions to religion, and uninfluenced by false professors, can generally award to the christian, in a good degree, the justice that his character deserves. But no sooner are graceless men initiated into the school of anti-christ than the heart is prepared and the seed of hatred to the true disciple of Christ sown, which seldom fails to produce a copious crop. Against no one is the hatred of work-mongers

more implacable than the spotless Lamb of God. Mark, it is not the *persons* of his followers that are the object of their hate; nay, it is for *His Name's sake*. Ah, says one, I like the *man* well enough, but that abominable doctrine that he preaches and holds. Yes, that's the trouble. If they only would know something else besides Christ and him crucified all would be well enough. He spake an immutable truth, one that his followers in all ages have verified, when he said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before you." Christ crucified was the great stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greek, and why? The Jews concluded that circumcision and the keeping of the law were the great *means* of salvation, and by getting the masses to believe that their salvation depended upon the efficiency of those means, the false prophets and priests, as the *instruments*, were enabled to wield a great power over both their persons and purses; hence it was said in old time, "The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means," &c.- Jer v. 31.

The Greeks relied upon their wisdom and ingenuity, acquired by learning or scientific knowledge, by the aid of which they had built a magnificent temple, in which they placed a famous goddess. The clergy, by administering in the temple, and other ingenious ones by making silver shrines or cases in which models of the temple and goddess were contained, acquired much wealth. When Christ crucified was preached by the apostles as the way of salvation, their craft was in danger, their ire incited, and they cried out, being full of wrath, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." More recently Arminians have blended the two theories in order to bear rule and acquire wealth. They have fully endorsed the means doctrine, by which, (as the false prophets and priests did,) they exercise much power over such as they get to regard them as "*instrumental saviors*," and then, instead of a magnificent temple at Ephesus, they have various ones built in different localities; and instead of the famous goddess Diana, they have an imaginary one that wants to save everybody, but can't for want of more efficiency in the means; and instead of silver shrines, (as they prefer using the precious metal otherwise,) they have substituted paper ones, (tracts,) in which to encase the models of their temples and idol; and when the servants of God preach Christ crucified as being amply competent to save his people, they both stumble and (seeing their craft in danger) cry out, Great are our "benevolent institutions." This endangering of their craft, and consequently their gain, soon engenders their hatred toward Christ and his humble followers, [although they use his name for the sake of deceiving,] therefore the saints in all ages have felt the effects of their hatred just in proportion as they have exhibited the image of Christ in the doctrine, ordinances and practice that he has instituted. But the faithful followers of the Lamb who patiently endure the hatred and opprobrium that is exercised toward them have a solacing reflection to sustain them, for it is affirmed by the Savior that "the same *shall* be saved." How submissively should the despised pilgrims await the consummation of the will of their heavenly Father, with a faith relying upon the assurances that the Captain of their salvation has given them of their final deliverance from the hatred, the persecution, and

all other evils that sin or a sinful world can afflict them with. "A faith so much divine may trials well endure." But patience and resignation to the divine will is all-important to the christian.

"What cannot resignation do?
It wonders can perform;
That powerful charm, Thy will be done,
Can lay the loudest storm."

But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains;" and he further adds, "Let him that is on the housetop not come down," &c. This abomination of desolation is spoken of by the prophet Daniel in the ninth chapter of his prophecy, wherein he says, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." In the same connection we are informed by the prophet that Jerusalem should be built to Messiah the Prince, who was to be cut off, but not for himself. The Lord says, "For the transgression of my people was he smitten." The great work of redemption thus accomplished by him was as the funeral knell of the old covenant, which was to be folded up as a useless garment and laid aside as a threadbare vesture, when the former heavens were to be rolled together as a scroll, their powers shaken to their final overthrow. The great anti-type of all the former types and shadows had appeared, the great sacrifice to which all others pointed being made, the temple worship was soon to cease forever, the magnificent superstructure to be razed to its foundation, so, that not one stone was to be left upon another. It was to cease forever to be a rallying point for the carnal crowd to meet with their significant oblations; no longer were the bellowing herds and bleating flocks to throng the streets of the "holy city" made with hands; all, all were to give place to the one great offering for sin, and instead of carnal ordinances imposed on carnal Jews until the time of reformation, the sacrifices of thanksgiving and solemn praises were to ascend to heaven from hearts smitten with the love of God. To close up the temple service the abomination of desolation was to be seen standing where it ought not. This abomination is spoken of by Daniel in the ninth and eleventh chapters of his prophecy, and evidently had reference to the Roman army which was to desolate the city and people of the Jews. It is said, therefore, in Daniel ix. 26, "And the people and the prince (the Roman soldiery with Titus at their head) shall come and shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." That sanctuary that was held sacred from the tread of a Gentile was to be desecrated by the Roman legions. It was a great abomination in the estimation of the Jews for a Gentile to enter the "holy sanctuary." One of the grave charges made against Paul, when at

Jerusalem, was that he had taken Greeks into the temple and polluted the holy place. According, therefore, to their laws and customs, this abomination was seen standing where it ought not. "Let him that readeth understand" seems to have been a caution to the disciples to hasten their flight when those things were seen, and hence it is said, "Let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains," for they could no longer find protection within the walls of the sacred and desolated city; "and let him that is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house," as the housetops were so constructed as to afford the most speedy exit from the city. As another precautionary sign to the disciples the Savior said, (Mat. xxiv. 28,) "For wheresoever the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together;" and it has been said that when the disciples saw the likenesses of the eagles on the Roman standards they immediately fled, thereby escaping the destruction.

It is said in the 19th and 20th verses, (the last ones on which my brother has requested my views,) "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be; and except that the Lord had shortened those days no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." It is appalling in the extreme to read the history of Josephus and others, who have depicted the terrible calamity that befell the Jews in that dreadful visitation. Famine, pestilence and the sword raged in their most terrific forms. Famine to that degree that mothers ate their own children; pestilence so alarming that thousands of victims lay prostrated in its pallid wake; the sword so fearful that the streets and avenues of the city were literally flooded with human gore. But why was it that it should exceed in severity anything that had been from the beginning of the creation, or should be? Because the Lord had not before, nor has he since the Jews, favored any nation with so many peculiar blessings as he did them; and likewise no nation has ever proved so recreant; none have more deeply revolted than they. He had raised them from a very small to a very great nation, watched over them with the vigilance of the kindest father, spread his protecting wings over them as a hen would over her brood to protect them, opened his bountiful hand and profusely scattered down blessings from the heavens, and caused the earth to teem with abundant plenitude to supply their wants, shed down the light of revelation like a pillar of fire to brighten their pathway to true greatness. And yet often did they sink into the grossest idolatry, were guilty of the basest lewdness and violent treachery, stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, they forsook their God - would none of his counsels, they killed his prophets and stoned such as he sent to them, and to crown the climax of their ignominy, when the Savior of sinners was sent into the world they betrayed and murdered him. Said he, "They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices; for the casting away of the simple shall slay them and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." The dreadful judgments that destroyed the Jewish nation should be a fearful warning to nations that have had the light of revelation and abused it. May our own profit by the example.

"But for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." Is it not astounding to see how soon the hatred and wrath of graceless men are evinced at the bare mention of the name of the elect, when we have recorded in the scriptures so many instances of signal blessings having been conferred upon the ungodly for their sake? Not only were the scenes of death and carnage stayed in the devoted city of Jerusalem on their account, but throughout, the world, in all ages, they have proved to have been a blessing to the very enemies that have been their most cruel persecutors. Why, "for tens' sake," (only ten of the elect,) the great cities of Sodom and Gomorrah would have been saved from the terrible storm of fire and brimstone that destroyed them. Abraham and the children of faithful Abraham (or the elect) were made a blessing to all the nations of the earth. Solomon said, in Prov. xi. 11, "By the blessing of the upright (or elect) the city is exalted;" and the Lord said, in Ezek. xxxiv. 26, "I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessings." Time would fail us to tell of the various instances wherein the elect have been a blessing to their most inveterate persecutors, but let it suffice us to say that, while suffering all this, they ever have been the very *salt of the earth*, to which it owes its preservation; but still they are regarded and treated by graceless professors of religion as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things.

"But let not all this terrify,
Pursue the narrow path;
Look to the Lord with steadfast eye,
And fight the fight of faith."

Why should not the elect be a blessing to all around them? The spirit that their blessed Lord breathes in them teaches them to love their enemies, bless those who curse, do good to such as hate them, and pray for them who despitefully use and persecute them.

Dear brethren and sisters, though the scowl and hatred of our enemies be upon us day by day, though the hand of persecution and the tongue of calumny may be against us incessantly, let us endeavor to imitate the example of our blessed Lord, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously. Then "fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb."- Ps. xxxvii. 1, 2. Read the whole psalm, and then let patience have her perfect work but a little while, and we shall be delivered forever from all the fiery trials that afflict us here. Soon, too, will God avenge his own elect that cry unto him day and night. As sure as God reigns retributive justice will be meted out in due time to all his and his elect's enemies; yea, as certainly as it was at the destruction of Jerusalem. The Lord has said, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm," and woe to those who disregard the mandate. His elect, who were chosen in him before

the foundation of the world, loved with an everlasting love, blessed with all spiritual blessings in him and kept by his almighty power, must and will be preserved, "though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

Then, O my Father's children, trust in him, wait upon him. The tocsin of war will be heard no more forever, and,

"Soon the joyful news will come,
Child, your Father calls, come home."

"The saints should never be dismayed,
Nor yield to hopeless fear;
For when they least expect his aid,
The Savior will appear."

Most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

I John 3:3.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., April 15, 1864.

BROTHER BEEBE: - My views are again solicited on a passage of scripture, and if you are disposed to publish, I will try to comply with the request, although I prefer that my friends would apply to others who can write more profitably to them and pleasing to myself. The request is:

"Will brother J. F. Johnson of Kentucky give, through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, his views on 1 John iii. 3, and oblige a brother? &c."

JOSIAH BENNET.

The text reads, "*And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*"

"This hope" is alluded to in the preceding verse. The apostle, after reminding his brethren of the wonderful love that the Father has bestowed on us, and that the world knoweth us not because it knew him not, says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God;

and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." The hope that we shall be like him and see him as he is, is the highest aspiration of the children of God.

I suppose the request of my brother will embrace particularly the *hope* and *purification* spoken of in the text. That hope is an exotic, not indigenous to our earthly country, but the product of "a better country, that is, an heavenly one." It is a precious gift from God our heavenly Father, which hath "GIVEN US everlasting consolation and *good hope* through grace." Hope is a fond anticipation, a patient waiting for, and a confident expectation of things not seen. For, "Hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The exercise and appreciation of a hope requires a basis on which it can rest, commensurate in importance with the thing or things anticipated. The warrant on which the christian's hope rests is fully competent to sustain it. The grace, blood, righteousness and intercession of the Lord Jesus constitute that warrant. It therefore "abideth," and is unlike the hope of the hypocrite that "shall perish." See Job viii. 13 and Prov. x. 28, vi. 7.

We can scarcely conceive a wider contrast than exists between the christian's hope and that of the hypocrite or workmonger. That of the former rests solely upon Christ, upon what HE is and what HE does; while the latter depends upon, "if I do," or, "If I keep on doing," or "hold out faithful." "I do" is the foundation on which that hope is based, and when "I do" fail, down goes the whole superstructure; for no edifice can stand when the foundation gives way. The characteristics that distinguish the two hopes are as diverse as are the hopes themselves. The hope of the self-righteous, is the precursor of self-laudation and bigotry, and prompts the possessor to say, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are," and to boast of the "efforts" he makes, the works he performs and the money he pays to support the cause and replenish the oft-depleted treasury of his imaginary god. See Luke xviii. 11, 12. Ignorant of being the servants of sin and under the dominion of the prince of the power of the air, they claim a degree of freedom amounting to un-bridled independence. According to their theory they are free born, free agents, have free wills, are free to choose, free to refuse, and, of course, free to go to heaven, if in no other way to "take it by storm;" free to take another course and go to the other place, and why not free to take a stubborn stand and go to neither place? Not only is each individual free to control his own destiny, but by concentrating their efforts they claim the liberty of controlling the destinies of the world. If they choose to sit down in supineness and negligence, "thousands perish for lack of knowledge." But on the other hand, a vigorous "effort," a proper use of means, zealous, active and "*indefatigable instrumental saviors*," and it would require but a few cents on the head to save the world. All these monstrous hallucinations are taught, and vehemently urged, under the influence of a delusive phantom, a false hope. Its legitimate tendency is to invalidate the Lord's work in the salvation of sinners, a defiance of his authority, and insubordination to his government, and therefore to initiate a form of government and a rule of action congenial

with the carnal and depraved nature of sinful mortals, and the result must inevitably be a general corrupting state of society where it obtains, and the complete counterplot of the purification spoken of in the text. "He that hath this hope purifieth himself." This hope is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," and the anchorage being cast "in the clefts of the rock," secures the "vessel of mercy" in the midst of all the hurricanes that can assail it. It is laid up for the children of God in heaven, (Col. i. 5) secured to them by infallible oaths, confirmed by immutable promises, upon the permanency of which they implicitly trust, and for the accomplishment of which they patiently wait and anxiously desire. It is one of the "all spiritual blessings" that were give us in Christ Jesus, and none possess it but those who have "Christ, which is our hope," or Christ in them the hope of glory, "a quickening Spirit;" and that Spirit is then and there the *motive* or propelling power that actuates the christian in the performance of every purifying deed that is preparatory for the full enjoyment of all that our hope anticipates; "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" and it is by the "working of his mighty power" that we purify ourselves even as he is pure. The works of the fleshly mind, fleshly lusts or desires, are all inadequate to perform any part of the work of this purification. In the flesh there dwelleth no good thing, nor can there be any progress made in the work of purifying by it, or anything pertaining to the flesh; and if any good is effected, any purification accomplished, it must be performed by a power radically different from, and infinitely more efficacious than belongs to the natural man, the old man, the depraved man, who is "without strength." He that hath this hope, hath also this power, and labors by its operation as did Paul, who said he labored, "striving according to HIS working, which worketh in me mightily;" for this hope is nothing less than the "Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope," and is therefore "Christ in you the hope of glory." - I Tim. i. 1; Col. i. 27. Then we may say with the prophet, "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou hast wrought all our works in us." - Isa. xxvi. 12. Those who have this hope should hallow the name of the dear "Emanuel, which being interpreted is God with us." Thus Jesus is the great purifier at last. On Calvary he "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and PURIFY unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." They were then and there made actually and manifestly pure before God's righteous law, and in the eye of justice; yet while in the flesh they have many, very many imperfections. Gold when in the mine is doubtless pure in one sense, still there are attached to it many foreign substances that have to be worked off by passing through the furnace or hot crucible. Like the gold, the children of God have to pass through the furnace; and therefore the Lord has his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. - Isa. xxxi. 9. And his people are chosen in a furnace of affliction. - Isa. xlviii. 10. That the process of purifying may be complete, their Lord "is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver," &c. - Malachi iii. 1-3. Under the influence of this working element within, they are to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the

soul," "be careful to maintain good works," "purify their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that they love one another with a pure heart fervently, being born again," &c. In short, they are to show their faith by their works, knowing that faith without works is dead, being alone.

Perhaps the hard matter for the christian to decide is, How am I to purify myself, seeing as I do so much sin and impurity in my thoughts, words and actions? Let us try to answer this question in the light of scripture. If Christ is our hope, as Paul says in I Tim. i. 1, if he is "in you the hope of glory," as he says in Col. i. 27, if he is THE HOPE of Israel, THE HOPE of his people, as it is said in Jer. xiv. 8, xvii. 13, and Joel iii. 16, we may not be at a loss to decide that "he that hath this hope" is in the possession of an indwelling power that can do wonders. If, on the other hand, in the flesh dwells no good thing, as the apostle says, Rom. vii. 18, and if without Christ we can do nothing, as he says in John xv. 5, it is evident that *that* power that enables the christian to purify himself does not belong or pertain to the flesh or fleshly nature. But again, if the child of hope "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him," as Paul says in Phil. iv. 13, that child may rest assured that the purifying himself is one among the *all things* that he can do through that medium; but in no other way, by no other power. The Lord is emphatically called "the strength" and "everlasting strength" of his people, in Psa. xvi. 1, lxxxi. 1, Isa. xxvi. 4, xlv. 24, and many other places. What is it that the christian cannot do, propelled by HIS strength?

This purifying power IN the christian is like leaven hid in the meal, which works there till the whole is leavened. See Matt. xiii. 33. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, &c. The kingdom of heaven is a spiritual kingdom; it is born of the Spirit, and is spirit. A component part of that kingdom dwells in each saint, and that spirit will dwell there and prompt that saint to carry on the work of purification until the whole lump is holy or pure. Our sinful *bodies* are not made pure while they are mortal; neither are our carnal minds, for they are enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. But, dear brethren and sisters, our mortal bodies must rest in the dust of the earth, slumber and moulder there; and then, not until then, will that enmity be slain, after which, our hope anticipates the day when we shall "see him as he is and be like him." Then let us toil on, and hope on, while our Shepherd is with and in us, we have great encouragement to press on in his strength, and fear not.

"Though many foes beset our road,
And feeble is our arm,
Our life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm."

Remember, we have only to work *out* what he works *in*, to carry on this work of purification so far as we are concerned, according to Isa. xxvi. 12, and Phil. i. 12, 13. The

bitter draughts, the ceaseless toil and relentless war through which we pass here will only enhance our relish for the sweet home, the felicitous rest and the everlasting peace that shall bless us there, when we see him and are like him. Transporting and transforming sight! Unveiling at once the full-orbed glory of his majestic personage, enstamping his heavenly likeness and pouring a lucid flood of brilliant glory over all the immortalized family, where they will shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever.

Brother Bennet, having tried to comply with your request in April last, and laid it aside, thinking it not worth publishing, on reviewing I have concluded to place it at the discretion of Brother Beebe. Love to the saints.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Ecclesiastes 12.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., April, 1865.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - As I have a few leisure moments, I will try to comply with the request of my brother, made through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, in the fifth number of the current volume, which is as follows:

"As an inquirer after truth, I solicit the views of Elder J. F. Johnson on Eccl. xii., more particularly on the grinders."

THOMAS J. TRIPLETT.

I think that the physiology of the human system is portrayed in this connection, and more particularly in the wane of life when the things of this world can afford us but little enjoyment. I have at different times within the last ten or twelve years, been asked my opinion on this connection of the scriptures, and have willingly given such views as I have had, but not having heard any others express their sentiments on the subject, I knew not but that mine were peculiar to myself until very recently.

After seeing the foregoing request and expressing my opinion to a friend in this place on the subject, he observed that he had "Scott's Commentaries on the Bible," and, on examination we found them so near the views that I had given, that some on comparing our opinions might suppose me guilty of plagiarism; or, in other words, "stealing thunder" of Dr. Scott. Such, however, is not the fact; for I never saw Scott's ideas, nor

those of any other commentator until recently, and long after my own were formed and expressed.

The chapter commences, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The Lord's dealings with the children of Israel were signalized by many miraculous works in their behalf, such as were not done for any other nation. From the time that he called Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, out of Macedonia, in all their wanderings until carried into Egypt, during their bondage there, their deliverance therefrom, in the destruction of the enemies that pursued them; their passage through the wilderness, the overthrow and driving out of mighty kings and nations that opposed them; his watchful eye over them; his mighty hand stretched out, doing wonders for them, until he finally settled them in a land flowing with milk and honey. There he gave them a national government, guaranteeing to them the land with all its blessings, saying, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land," (Isa. i. 10,) but threatening them with terrible destruction should they forget or cease to remember the Lord. - See Dent. vi. 12; viii. 11, 14, 19; and hence "the preacher's" injunction with many other similar ones, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Here the writer reminds us that the days of decrepitude will soon hasten on, the years of the decline of life draw nigh, when the senses, organs and powers of the system will be so much enervated, obscured or destroyed as to lessen or spoil all their enjoyments, however many blessings and privileges the Lord may have heaped upon us; sad truth, realized by many who have been signally favored, "While the sun or the moon or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain." Or when in the decline of life, the organs of sight shall be obscured, that the sun's genial rays shall appear darkened, his light dimmed; when the light of the moon and stars shall be too feeble to illumine the nocturnal pathway; and when after the rain, instead of the return of the cheerful beams of the sun, it shall be as though the dark clouds were still hovering in the heavens by reason of the failing of the eyesight. "In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble."

The body is compared in scripture to a temple, house or tabernacle, in John ii. 19, 21, and 2 Cor. v. 1. The hands are the more active members of the body in washing, cleansing, clothing and otherwise keeping the house in order; and as they become feeble and tremulous in the decline of life, I suppose that they are here alluded to as "the keepers of the house." "And the strong men shall bow themselves." As the lower limbs of the body support the entire frame, and convey it from place to place by their strength; and as they are bowed and enfeebled by the weight and toil of years, and thereby fail to bear up the burdens and perform the drudgery as in the days of youth and vigor, I suppose they are here referred to.

"And the grinders cease because they are few," (or "fail because they grind little," as said in the margin.) My brother requests my views "more particularly" of this part of the chapter, but I know not that I need say more. I think it has special allusion to the teeth, as

they perform the important office of grinding or masticating the food, and thereby preparing it for the support and nourishment of the entire system. Should brother T. become so far advanced in years (if he has not already) as to witness that those teeth, commonly called grinders, cease to perform the work of grinding, (for they usually fail first having most of the work to perform,) and only chop or mince the diet, whereas they could once grind it as to powder, he will have a realizing sense of the truth of this expression.

"And those that look out of the windows be darkened." This part of the subject no doubt has reference to the eyes, the sight of which becomes weak and dim, as the blighting effect of years and the consequent decline of all other organs and members fail with them.

"And the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low." The passways through which the nutriment travels to the various parts of the system become closed or obstructed because of the imperfect manner of grinding, masticating or properly preparing the aliment for the body, and thus enfeeble and hasten the decline of all its complicated machinery.

"And he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low." How often it is the case that in extreme old age we become excitable as little children, when the shrill notes of a bird will startle us; and more especially when our time-worn and weary system becomes so frail and feeble by reason of age, that we are unable to take proper exercise; we become restless upon our beds at night, and when the morning dawns, the chirping of the bird or the crowing of the cock will rouse us from our slumbers to toil and tremble through another weary day. Our vocal organs or musical powers are likewise debilitated and disorganized with the general wreck, their melody is brought down, so that when we attempt the song, it is apparent that the daughters of music are brought low. "Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way."

When in youthful vigor and activity we can sport over the precipice, or play upon the housetop; whereas, in the years of our decrepitude we tremble at the idea of occupying an exalted position, and quake with fear at finding an obstruction in our pathway, lest we should be hurled to the ground.

"And the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail." The hoary head presents the appearance of the almond-tree flourishing its white blossoms; but blossoms are transient things, and the blossoming head presages that the period of our dissolution is fast approaching. Let us keep in view one bowed down with the weight of years, feeble and languid, with weary limbs and feeble powers, barely sufficient to bear up the tottering frame, and when he has all he can trudge along with, the smallest additional weight, even a grasshopper, as it were, will become a burden. Moreover, his "desire shall fail," the world and its all have lost charms, he is about to take

his flight, or his plunge to his "long, long home;" and either for feeling or for fashion "the mourners," draped in sable mantles, "go about the streets."

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken." I suppose the *wise man* here alluded to the nervous cord which with its thousands of ramifications convey the sense of feeling to all parts of the system. Loose it from its reservoir (the nervous fluid is said to have its seat in the brain) that feeds and supplies it, and sensation would immediately cease in all parts of the system, and consequently death directly ensues.

"Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern." I suppose that Cruden is correct when he explains the word *pitcher* to signify in a certain sense such vessels in the human body as convey vital supplies into the several parts of it, as the veins, arteries, &c. The circulation of the vital fluid or blood through the system is truly wonderful. Dr. Watts, said to be the master-poet, says,

"Our heart contains a thousand springs,
And dies if one be gone;
Strange that a harp of a thousand strings,
Should keep in tune so long."

Thrown out from the heart through the great aorta, or main arterial trunk, which ramifies into myriads of branches that penetrate the whole system, and meet at their extremities as many myriads of venal branches to convey it back to the heart and lungs, the blood performs its constant and complete circuit; and, let the heart be compared to a fountain, or cistern, the great artery the pitcher, and the circulating medium the wheel, we have a striking illustration of the expression. Break either the pitcher or the wheel and then must "the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to the God who gave it," to receive its final and irrevocable doom; for the unalterable decree of Jehovah is, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

When we review the transient career of our fast fleeting lives, the utter impossibility of all earth's emoluments to satisfy, happify or even to perpetuate them beyond a span, we may truly say with the "Preacher," "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" and with the poet,

"How vain are all things here below,
How false, and yet how fair;
Each pleasure hath its poison, too,
And every sweet a snare."

Brother Beebe, I have penned the foregoing thoughts rather hurriedly, and perhaps have written as much as you will be willing to peruse and publish at one time, and feeling, that I lack both time and capacity to pursue the subject further. I hope that my

brother Triplett will excuse me for passing over the remaining part of the chapter, for I do not feel as if I could write profitably at this time.

Greeting all the household of faith, I desire to remain their brother and servant most affectionately,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Matthew 6:33.

Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, Jan. 28, 1866.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." - Matt. vi. 33.

BROTHER BEEBE: - Some time has elapsed since I troubled you with a communication; not for want of a sincere desire for the SIGNS OF THE TIMES to be perpetuated, nor yet because I have not appreciated the contents of our valuable corresponding medium, but simply because I cannot write on the sublime and momentous subjects discussed in their columns as I would wish to, nor as some of your correspondents do.

There have been a number of requests published in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and communicated to me in private letters, for my views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on different texts of scripture, that I have not responded to; but my failure to do so was not because of a careless indifference or disregard of the requests of my brethren, sisters or friends, but for two other reasons. First, some desired my views on texts that I thought I did not sufficiently comprehend myself, to attempt to teach others; and secondly, other requests were made when I was from home, and traveling from place to place for two or three months, when I had not much opportunity to write. I hope, therefore, they will excuse me. I will, however, present to your readers a few of my thoughts on the text placed at the head of this article.

It is a portion of what is usually called Christ's sermon on the mount, delivered exclusively to his disciples, and no doubt designed for their exclusive benefit in all ages of the world. Just before using the language referred to, he assures them of the fraternal and provident care he exercises toward them in reminding them of the provision he has made for the fowls of the air, that neither sow, reap, nor gather into barns, and that yet he feeds them; and of the flowers of the valley, that neither toil or spin, and yet, even

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. He hath prepared for them a city, kingdom or house, as it is interchangeably called, to dwell in. In that house are many mansions, affording room and accommodation, convenience and comfort to all the inmates. Therein is provided the best, the very best of food, drink and clothing, all "without money and without price." Moreover, it is so constructed as to form a most desirable asylum of rest for the weary, those who "labor and are heavy laden." Here they lie down in green pastures, are led beside still waters; and as a place of defense it is an invulnerable munition of rocks, environed with invincible walls and bulwarks. They abide under the shadow of the Almighty, have a secure hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest; a pure river of water of life glides through the kingdom; the eternal God is the Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

"Nor can her deep foundation move,
Built on his Godhead and his love."

But above all, the delightful companions that are there to cheer and encourage, console and raise up the bowed down, should engage and attract our attention.

"There our best friends, our kindred dwell,
There God our Savior reigns."

Another happy and consoling reflection is that the King has promised that it shall be a "quiet habitation." The wars, commotions, strife and discord that agitate the world, terrify its inhabitants, and line the earth with gore, are to be hushed into silence, banished thence forever. Swords are to be beaten into plow-shares, spears into pruning-hooks; the nations, Jews and Gentiles, that compose the kingdom, are to learn war with carnal weapons no more. Let us all try to appreciate the quietude of the kingdom, and like David, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces; for my brethren and companions' sake I will say, Peace be within thee." To those who are taught to love "peace and pursue it," here is an alluring and attracting asylum. It is one of the many characteristic marks that distinguish the kingdom of God from all other organizations - a fruit of the Spirit, it proves the presence of the God of peace. As God hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Yes, in this kingdom is the residence of the King of saints, the Author of eternal salvation, in whom dwells "the fullness of the Godhead bodily," from whom proceeds every "good and perfect gift" - all the real joy that we realize on earth, all that we anticipate when time is no more.

"How charming is the place,
Where my Redeemer, God,

Unveils the beauties of his face,
And sheds his love abroad."

How meager, how trifling and vain is the pomp, power, wealth and splendor of this poor world, when compared with the place where Jesus holds his court and pours out his fullness. "For it pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell." "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."

Having tried to exhibit some of the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God, let us now consider the best method, as well as the great advantage of seeking it first - of giving it the pre-eminence over all terrestrial things. In order to the peace, prosperity, enjoyment and mutual felicity of the subjects of this kingdom, a strict observance must be paid to the doctrine, laws, ordinances and particular rules for the government of the kingdom, according to the statute given by the King who reigns in righteousness, and the princes who rule in judgment. These princes are to sit on twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. "For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David." As before remarked, this is to be a quiet habitation, and the King thereof has made ample provision to secure this quietude, for "he shall send forth his angels, (messengers) and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." If, therefore, a right hand (a laborer) offends, it must be cut off, or a right eye, (a watchman) pluck it out, for such are the most dangerous offenders when they do offend. If he should be merely an erring brother, he will weep, and repent of his wickedness, and may be restored in the spirit of meekness; but if he be a false teacher, or false brethren who have crept in to spy out the liberty of the subjects, they will gnash their teeth, and develop hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditious, heresies and envyings, with other works of the flesh, and not infrequently call to their aid the cohorts of Babylon to destroy the kingdom and its inhabitants. By their fruits they will make themselves known, and when known, we are not to give place to them by subjection for an hour. For the sake of perpetuating the peace, unity and comfort of the kingdom, these rules must be punctually observed and faithfully enforced. I think it would be well for each subject in such cases to "raise both hands," as said an aged watchman in Virginia, "one for peace, the other for war." Peace, if it can be obtained by peaceable measures, if not, war; not with carnal weapons, "for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal;" but unsheath the sword of the Spirit, take the word of God, 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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." By the proper use of this formidable weapon, every joint, band or ligament that might in any manner or degree bind us to Babylon or any of her cohorts, may be summarily severed,

and as a consequence the kingdom of God would shine forth in all her pristine beauty and glory, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." The King has richly endowed his kingdom with all requisite rules for the regulation of her doctrine, reproof and instruction in righteousness, that each subject may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works; and now, at this very time in which we live, dark and lowering as the clouds may seem to hover over, thick and gloomy as the mists and shades may be gathered round us, in my humble opinion the signs of the times indicate, identify and point out the kingdom of God as diverse from all other kingdoms as it has been at any time since the days of the apostolic miracles, and under circumstances when, according to the nature of surrounding events, the very reverse of her present condition might be expected. Priestcraft and fanaticism have ridden triumphant through the streets and lanes of the daughters of Babylon for years gone by, and what has been the result? Within their cage have been political differences, conflicting interests, antagonistical doctrines, and jarring localities. The opposing elements have met in terrific collision. The feeble cords that have united them have snapped and given way with the tension. Alienation, strife and seditions have done their work, produced their legitimate fruit, torn them piecemeal, rent them to shreds, they have manifestly hatched the cockatrice's eggs, and that which is crushed has broken out a viper. "Their works are works of iniquity, and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths." Babylon stands out conspicuously written in their foreheads or proceedings. Yes, this viper has crawled from its slimy lair, and with fangs imbued with the poison of asps has thrown the deadly bane into both civil and anti-christian religious organizations, and they are all confusion. Turning from this cage of unclean and hateful birds, tottering to its downfall, with joy we behold,

"A kingdom that shall never decay,
While time sweeps earthly thrones away."

This superstructure is built by Omnipotence. It was said long ago, "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed nor left to other people." The God of Israel has raised her above the low and beggarly elements and pestilential atmosphere in which the daughters of Babylon reside, established her in the top of the mountains, exalted her above the hills. None of her stakes shall ever be removed, none of the cords thereof broken. She stands upon the Rock of Ages; her God and King has built her there. His name is her strong tower; she has run into it and is safe. The rain has descended, the floods came, the winds (of false doctrine) blew, and beat upon it, and it fell not with the general crash, for it was founded upon a rock. There she has stood, there she now stands, and there she will forever stand, a monument of the omnipotency of her King and the invincibility of her fortifications. The spirit of strife and the demon of discord that have

torn to pieces and rent asunder the kingdoms of anti-christ, forming out of the same heterogeneous mass churches North and churches South, have had but little to do in alienating the subjects of this kingdom from each other, or weakening the cords of brotherly love that knit them together. And while their secular interests have clashed, as did the interests of others whose feeble cords gave way, and while their different locations have, according to the usual course of events, been naturally calculated to produce strife and animosities, as has been the case in the ranks of Babylon, all these conflicting interests, all the preference of jarring and different localities have been by the subjects of this kingdom thrown to the wind; and now, whether they hail from north or south, east or west, they eagerly and warmly grasp each other's hand in concord, friendship, fellowship and sweet union. Who is so blind as not to see in all this a clear, visible and outward demonstration of the fact that the kingdom of God is first with this people; that earthly preferences and worldly emoluments are but secondary matters compared with it, and therefore must yield and give place to that which is first, or most momentous? I tell you, my dear brethren and sisters, that it is a telling fact, one that stands out prominent and visible before the gaze of all men, as the King of this kingdom has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." And who is so dim-sighted as not to see that those whose religious ties have given way to their first, or political or worldly preferences, are not of that kingdom? And where is the organized religious body (I speak of what Paul calls "our religion,") that has not carried this spirit of strife and bloodshed into their pulpits and their churches? I ask, Where, under the blue heavens, is it to be found, outside of the Old School or Primitive Baptists? That some important event will soon succeed this ocular and outward display and manifestation of the presence of the God of peace in his kingdom, I have but little doubt; but, what that event may be, I shall not here attempt to predict. That this spirit of peace, concord, amity and unity does exist in an unusual degree amongst us under the circumstances surrounding us, is palpable and unmistakable. I have witnessed it in my travels among this people, and trust that I have felt it in my heart. True, there have been some very few isolated cases where individuals have caught the spirit of fanaticism and grasped the weapons of the sable adversary to fight us with, but they are few and far between, not enough to disturb the general peace of the kingdom or obscure its identity, but barely sufficient to prove to us the truth of the assertion of Paul when he said, "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And of John when he said, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us," &c. When they do go out, they seldom fail to give sufficient evidence by which the children of the kingdom may demonstrate them. If they are false teachers or false brethren that have come in unawares to spy out our liberties, they prove to be the most inveterate enemies to the children of the kingdom. They will call on, amalgamate with, and use all the venomous poison of the cohorts of Babylon, all the sophistry to bewitch and draw a party or clan of

disciples after them; and where such fruits are developed, the children of the kingdom should mark them and have no fellowship with them. By their fruits they are to be known, and will be. On the other hand, if they be erring brethren, they will not rail and try to devour the flock, but exhibit the marks of penitence and show more of a lamb-like disposition; and, as is generally the case, such a one may be restored in the spirit of meekness, lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. When we consider the inroads that fanaticism has made, the railing and rending that it has produced among the professed religious orders of our country, it is almost miraculous that so few cases have occurred to disturb our harmony; and those few have been so minutely defined and so pointedly condemned by the King and his princes, who have foretold that such cases should occur in the church or kingdom, that they stand out as testimonials and prove to us where the kingdom is and who compose it, and therefore, though painful at this critical juncture, should not discourage us; for they are among the all things that work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose. "It must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." But, my dear brethren, when offenses come, meet them like christians. Suffer them not to disturb the general peace of the kingdom. As to those who offend, deal with them promptly and faithfully as your Lawgiver directs, regardless of consequences; and then, "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their reviling;" but when they revile, revile not again. "Render not evil for evil, nor railing for railing;" and may the Lord continue to bless us with a peaceable, plentiful, prosperous, safe and happy home in the kingdom of God, for which let us all pray, for his great name's sake.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Reply To An Inquiry By J. Strickland.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Feb., 1867.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I have not written for the SIGNS OF THE TIMES recently as in former times, because I have felt that my productions have been no considerable acquisition to the paper. I hope, however, that neither yourself nor your readers will conclude from the fact of my not writing, that my esteem for our medium of

correspondence, or my desire for its perpetuity or usefulness, is in any degree abated. I rejoice to hear so many of the afflicted children of Zion express (through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, isolated as they are from their companions in tribulation) the comfort they receive in reading the communications from yourself and correspondents. I am glad, too, to find that many new communicants, and some of them young, with profitable gifts to the church, have taken up the pen and so richly contributed to the pages of the paper. But when I reflect on the obituary department of the past volume, a gloom enshrouds my mind. Some of the ablest ministers of the New Testament that I have known, with others who were near and dear to me, have been called away to reap the rich reward of the righteous. How often have their wise counsels and consoling administrations instructed and comforted us, both viva voice and with their pens. But on the other hand, it is encouraging to learn through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and otherwise, that the good Shepherd is calling and sending into his vineyard young and faithful laborers, the sound of whose significant voices, like the bells and pomegranates upon the robe of Aaron's ephod, indicate that the High Priest still lives, and that the plenitude of his grace is still abundant. My whitening locks admonish me that, like my fathers in Israel, I too must soon "lay my armor by;" but the many testimonials that we have that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and that he will never leave nor cease to provide for his Zion, the reflection of which seems to fill me with a spirit of resignation; and I do not desire to pass in this poor world one step beyond the bounds that my Father has assigned me. Fearful and momentous events have characterized the flight of the past few years, and perhaps more thrilling and important ones to the church will soon follow in their wake. But, as the Lord ever has, in like manner he ever will provide for his bride. Whether quaffing the bitter waters of Marah, or drinking the refreshing streams of the smitten Rock; whether weeping in the furnace of affliction, or shouting from the top of the mountain; whether buffeting the billows of tribulation, or feasting in the house of Bethel, he will raise up an Ebenezer for his people, spread a table before them in the presence of their enemies, and prepare for them "A feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined."

"In every condition, in sickness and health,
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As her days may demand shall her strength ever be."

But while the clouds of war have so angrily scowled over our political horizon, and while their direful contents have stained with crimson the once fair face of our country, and darker and gloomier ones may seem still to lower around us, let us not forget to extol the wondrous love and beneficent care of our kind Father, that through the dread gloom he has deigned to send a ray of light, or drop a refreshing shower occasionally, to cheer and replenish his way-worn children; for although he has been bidding the old veterans of

the cross to lay aside their armor, he is raising up younger ones to buckle it on and fight the battles of the Lord. And while he has been calling many others of our companions from their toils and labors, to return to their rest, in many parts of our country he has been saying "to the prisoners, Go forth, and to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." And with joy we have witnessed their obedience to the heavenly call.

Within the past year I have baptized twenty-eight in the four churches I serve, and I think I never witnessed clearer exhibitions of the reign of grace than have been portrayed here in the past summer and fall. Our houses have been crowded with attentive listeners, and sometimes would contain scarcely half the attendance.

Elder Strickland inquired through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES sometime back whether there was a church to be found in prosperity, where the doctrine of election and predestination was harped upon. For his edification and comfort, (if he will accept it as such) this may inform him that there are some in this vicinity that we consider in a prosperous condition; and if their humble servant is capable of preaching those fundamental, and, to the saints of God, heart-cheering points of doctrine, they are usually dwelt upon here. It is known in ten or twelve of the United States, as well as in Canada where I have traveled, that it is not my custom to evade them. I have, not shunned to declare them to the churches here that I have served for from four to near seven years, knowing not how to preach the gospel without them; and I do know that "All the counsel of God" cannot be declared without them. And furthermore, I have no idea that any well informed and faithful servant of God will evade or speak lightly of the doctrine of election and predestination. We have had a time of uninterrupted peace since I have been here, and the Lord has been adding to the church such as should be saved. It is our custom to inquire for the peace of the church at each of our church meetings, and there has not been one solitary response to the contrary since I have been with the churches here; and taking all this together, we call it prosperity. I admit that more proselytes can be made by getting up "protracted meetings," exciting and harrowing up the depraved natural passions of men and women; but what are they when made, and where to be found afterward? Go to the tippling shops, dancing parties, &c., and there many of them may be found; but where children are "born of God," when he has "brought them to the banqueting house," when he has delivered them from the power of darkness and translated them into the kingdom of his dear Son; or, when saved and called with a holy calling, not according to their works at protracted meetings or elsewhere, but according to his own purpose (predestination) and grace which was given us in Christ before the world began; then they are disposed to adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in their conversation and conduct, and,

"Dare to defend his noble cause,
And yield obedience to his laws."

Yes, and when the Lord forms his people for himself, they shall show forth his praise." His ways and works are not like man's; men may make scores of proselytes at protracted meetings, but it often "happens to them according to the true proverb."- See Prov. xxvi. 11. But when the Lord prepares his people for himself the work is like himself - eternal. "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." Our enemies are often taunting us with being but a mere handful, very few, just ready to dwindle away. How is it that we make any kind of a show with them? We have no manufacturing establishments where we make preachers; no nursery, as they sometimes call their Sunday School, to prepare our children for church membership; hold no "protracted meetings" for the purpose of making scores of proselytes. I think we can explain the matter. If the Lord would make as many Old School Baptists as they make proselytes, they would soon be far behind us numerically, but as it is, if their proselytes would remain steadfast as the Lord's people do, they would soon be like grasshoppers in multitude. But when we consider how flighty, fickle minded and evanescent they are, we need not wonder that they are so tardy in converting the world. So much work to do, and so much to "do over again;" no wonder they call much for indefatigable, "indomitable laborers." We have heard of the preacher in Ohio, perhaps, who said on a certain occasion, "One year ago a hundred sinners were converted, and thank God, they have all held out faithful but ninety." Ninety per cent per annum is a heavy loss, and as all now depends upon their own exertions, (the Lord having done his part as they say) it will probably be some time yet before they realize their "millennial glory." But all this perfectly coincides with the brief existence and imbecile nature of fallen man; his works are like himself.

David says his days are as a hand-breadth, and his age as nothing; that every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Then why marvel at the instability of his religion, the vacillating nature of all his works? Can we expect one whose days are as a hand-breadth and whose age is as nothing, to perform work that will endure eternally? Both revelation and reason would answer, No. On the other hand, the Lord's works are like himself. "He speaks and it is done, he commands, and it stands fast." He is eternal, his works endure. The Father says of his first-born, "His seed will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." He is immutable; his works are unchangeable, they stand forever. Then may the people whom God has formed for himself, stand with ecstatic amazement on their immutable basis, and in their enraptured contemplation, run back to the birth of time, and leap from thence into the vast expanse of eternity, view there with joy-inspiring rapture their standing in Christ their living head before the world or time was, retrace their flight to the brink of time, and droop the wing there in view of their dreadful fall in, and by virtue of a relation to an earthly parent, all seeming to have been lost. But hark! A cheering voice is heard from their first abode assuring him that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. He sees the dread dilemma into which his ever loved children are hurled, with a weighty debt upon them, assumes that debt, and in the fullness

of time bows down to this sin-benighted world, is "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

"He raised them from the dreadful pit,
The gates of gaping hell,
And fixed their standing more secure,
Than 'twas before they fell."

Yes, he came to redeem, he did redeem, and that was an eternal redemption. He came to save; he did save, and that was an eternal salvation. He came that they might have life; he gives them life, and that is eternal life. He bequeaths to them an exhaustless portion, and that is an eternal inheritance, it "fadeth not away;" all are like himself.

How wide the contrast then, while they stand unmoved upon their immovable Foundation and with an eye given suitable to the occasion, see with serene composure the man-made proselytes, with all the other works of man, bearing the impress of mutation and decay in all their lineaments and features passing away, and view with ecstatic wonder their own high, happy destiny, sealed with blood, and hear the thrilling voice of him who has said, "His seed will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven."

Your brother affectionately,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Response To Brother Daniel Durand, On Regeneration.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., March 13, 1867.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE AND READERS OF THE SIGNS: - Since brother Daniel Durand has seemed to think myself (with others) worthy his inquiry, I have concluded once more to resume my pen, not thinking however, that the absence of my name has at all lessened the value or interest of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. And now, when I commence this communication, it is "with fear and trembling," from the fact that my views on the important subject contemplated may not only be new to yourself and others, but the most important item is *are they right?* If so, whether new or old is a matter of but minor importance. The subject proposed, and upon which I design offering some remarks, is REGENERATION. What is regeneration? By reference to the root of this

term, generate, we find it means "to beget, to produce, to procreate," &c. To regenerate, then, would be to beget, to produce or procreate that which has been begotten, &c., before. Jesus is called the first-begotten, (Heb. i. 6,) "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world." He is also said to be the first-begotten from the dead, (Rev. i. 5,) "And from Christ Jesus, who is the faithful witness and the first begotten from the dead." It appears from these texts that he was the first-begotten when he was brought into the world, and again, the first-begotten from the dead. This last or second begetting I consider "THE REGENERATION." Now, in commenting on this profound subject, I have the gratification to know that (provided you, brother Beebe, see proper to publish) "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." My views, for aught I know, are peculiar to myself, and for that very reason I wish them to come to the light, and pass the scrutiny of enlightened ones, that if evil they may be reproved. I have often heard my brethren use the expression, "regeneration *or* the new birth," as though the words were identical. They are certainly words of different signification, and cannot mean the same thing. The word occurs twice in the New Testament and not at all in the Old. Why is it that the word is not used in all the former dispensation? That the saints there constituted a part of the "generation of Jesus Christ," (for I think that expression, as used in the beginning of the New Testament, means more than merely his genealogy as an individual) and that they were born there, and born of God, I think, is evident, and appears so from Psa. xvii. 39, and lxxxvii. 5, 6, with many other passages. Thus we have a generation and a birth, spoken of in the Old Testament, but nothing is said of regeneration. If that birth and regeneration were one, and the same thing, can it be possible that the holy writers would have failed to use the word in all their writings? Generation must precede a birth, and I suppose that the children of God were generated in "the first-begotten of the Father," before the world began, and they constituted "the holy seed, the substance," according to Isa. vi. 13, which substance is also spoken of in Psa. cxxxix. 16, "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them." It therefore appears to me that the spiritual children of God were generated, produced, procreated before the world began, and regenerated, reproduced, &c., at the quickening and resurrection of the Savior, not before nor after that period. Hence I am led to the conclusion that there never was a case of regeneration before the crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God, that there never has been since, and never will be hereafter. Don't be alarmed, brethren; await the passing of sentence until we shall have appealed "to the law and to the testimony." Now let us turn to the two texts where the term regeneration occurs and examine in the light of revelation. Mat. xix. 28. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Here is first brought to view "THE REGENERATION." Jesus and his members are one and indivisible forever, he the head of the "train," accomplishing all, and they follow.

But, again, see Tit.iii. 5. "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." What washing and renewing can the apostle here allude to, except the washing us "from our sins in his own blood," according to Rev. i. 5, and Hos. vi. 2? "After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." In Isa. xxvi. 19, it is said, "Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body shall they arise," &c. See also 2 Cor. v. 14. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." Again, Paul says in Rom. vi. 9, "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him," &c. Then it is said in Eph.ii. 4-6, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us *together with Christ*, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up *together*, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In this chain of testimony we are represented as being "dead" with Christ, and "washed from our sins," "revived" and "quickened together with him." Does not this look like a death and reproduction or regeneration? And I do think that the whole work was completed by the same glorious personage at the time alluded to, for the whole family of the first born, according to Isa. lxvi. 7, 8. "Before she ("Zion which is above") travailed she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a man child." Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." Here we behold with pleasing wonder and profound admiration the transcendently great and marvelous work of salvation, redemption and regeneration, all completed in Jesus when he "was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." Not one particle of this momentous work left for poor, imbecile man to perform, or to have any part or parcel of it to accomplish - all perfected and finished by the Son of God, who "loved us and washed as from our sins in his own blood," "by the washing of regeneration," and "according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

I think it cannot be scripturally denied that the two texts under investigation have reference to the time and circumstances that I have alluded to, and as I find no other regeneration spoken of in the scriptures, I can conceive of no necessity for another. Then, as we must be generated before born, and regenerated before "born again," and as the two foregoing texts on the subject show that this regeneration was accomplished in and by Jesus Christ, tell me, in the light of revelation, where is the need of another? And if there is use for another, where is it referred to in the scriptures? And if this regeneration is going on in the children of God now, since the washing of regeneration effected by Christ when he saved us by it, in what condition is a child of God when regenerated and yet not born? For we again repeat, regeneration must precede "being born again." If this position be correct, all the canting and ridiculous pretensions of will-worshipers about "regenerating sinners," "regenerating the world," is but a miserable vagary, a capricious

whim without the slightest foundation in scripture to sustain it; and if we contend in the absence of scriptural evidence that regeneration is still going on in man since it was completed in Christ, are we not in a degree partakers of their evil deeds?

I earnestly desire Old School Baptists to examine every item of their faith, and try themselves to see whether they be in the faith in all particulars; prove each article by the unerring testimony, and finding it sustained by the standard rule, earnestly to contend for it. And, on the other hand, when we find that anyone of those items, after being weighed in the balance, is found wanting, dispense with it immediately - the sooner the better. It is true that, replete as the few past years have been with misery and mischief, they have been as replete with incidents calculated to exhibit the distinction between the church of Christ and the minions of anti-christ; for circumstances have not been wanting to show that the former has presented a wall of truth that has proved invulnerable to the lashing of the waves of the waters of Babylon, while the same circumstances have exhibited on the part of the latter a tissue of error, frail indeed, torn to tatters by the storm of their own raising, or dashed to pieces by the waters of Meribah, which is "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt;" so that the line of demarcation between Christ and anti-christ has been more clearly drawn and more visibly portrayed, perhaps, than for centuries past. Yet all this presents no good reason why we should in the smallest degree relax our energies in scrutinizing every point, proving all things, holding fast to that which is good; and when we can present a breastwork of *naked truth* we will be invincible indeed, and can bid defiance to all our foes.

For years past I have listened to the public remarks of my brethren on the subject of regeneration, and I am not able today to say what the prevailing opinion is, unless it be that it is identical with the new birth, and to make it so, appears to me at least, to be literally an abuse of language. I have heard the subject investigated in social circles, and different opinions advanced, but none of them satisfactory to myself; but perhaps that was in consequence of my dullness of apprehension. Some have concluded that it is when we first *see* ourselves sinners; but I am at a loss to know how a child could see before it was born. Others have thought that it was when we are first quickened; but that is not only not the case in ordinary generation, but it seems to me that when we have life we have light also, and can see, "for in him was life, and the life was the light of men." In fact I could arrive at no conclusion satisfactory to myself except the one exhibited, or at least aimed to be exhibited in the foregoing remarks. But it will be understood that the preceding observations are simply the views of a very humble individual, and one whom I know to be very liable to err; and although honestly entertained, the best I can glean from the scriptures, and satisfactory as they may be to myself, may be far otherwise to my dear brethren and sisters who may deem them worth their reading and meditation. They are certainly entitled to no regard whatever unless sustained by the scriptures; and I do hope that all who may think them worth their attention will carefully and critically compare them with that infallible standard; and should they be found wanting in measure

and weight there, not only lay them aside as the production of a weak and erring brother, and therefore useless, but rest assured the writer is open for conviction and anxious for correction if wrong, and earnestly desires that such as may confer upon him that favor may not only receive the ample reward of him that "converteth a sinner from the error of his way," but aside from that, they shall have the sincere thanks, and I trust, the honest gratitude of their humble servant and brother in the best of bonds,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Sickness Of The Author And His Family.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., May 16, 1867.

DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - I have been prevented from visiting the associations east, and very reluctantly. The cause was ill health with my wife and self. I have had two or three attacks of chills and fever, which retarded some of my business, so that when the time came I could not leave. My wife has had a considerable hemorrhage from the lungs, but it has entirely ceased, and we are now enjoying tolerable good health. I sorely regret that I could not be at the associations in the east, for I anxiously desired to see the dear brethren and sisters once more. Receive and tender to them my warmest affections, and tell them that if we are spared, and the Lord will, I shall see many of them yet. While I now write I reflect, and my mind takes a flight to the Baltimore Association. How I would like to be with you tonight. I ask myself the question, Has Satan hindered me? I was even eager for a while for the time to arrive for me to start. I do hope, however, that the Lord will be manifestly present at all your meetings. Should that be the case, it will afford me some comfort to hear of it.

My wife unites with me in love to yourself, sister Beebe, the family and friends generally.

Your brother and devoted friend,

J. F. JOHNSON.

THE REGENERATION.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Oct.18,1867.

BROTHER BEEBE: I have received and read several letters responding to a communication written by me on the subject of regeneration, and published in No.9 of the present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. I had carefully examined the subject before I wrote, and felt then, as I do yet, that the sentiments therein contained were in complete accordance with the revelation that God had given on the subject. It is a subject that, so far as I was advised, had not been particularly investigated, the importance of which, as I thought, claimed some attention. I gave it the closest attention that my humble capacities would permit me to do, not knowing at the time that any other person entertained the same views on the same subject, and very far from desiring to urge them upon anyone who could not see that they were sustained by the Scriptures. The concurrence of a number of my brethren and sisters through the SIGNS, and by private letters, among whom are some of the ablest ministers of the New Testament that I have had the pleasure of an acquaintance with, has confirmed me in the views that their humble servant has expressed on this momentous subject.

But others of my brethren have differed with me, and no doubt as honestly as I have entertained my own sentiments. It is certainly their privilege to do so, and not mine to complain of them for so doing. Some of the brethren in writing to me use what I consider harsh language, which I shall carefully aim to avoid. One serious objection to the sentiments expressed in the above named communication is the fact that I have spoken of a spiritual seed or family in Christ that have ever stood identified and in union with him, and that these spiritual children are born of God. This family is styled; "Brother Johnson's imaginary and ideal beings." Well, I do *imagine* that there are such beings, and shall endeavor to show in the following part of this communication whether they are merely *ideal* or *real*. I believe that one general idea will comprise all the objections to my views that I have noticed, which is, as expressed by one of the objectors, that "The regeneration and the new birth are identical, different expressions meaning the same state."

Now, to meet this main objection, it is only necessary for us to pause a moment and think dispassionately on the meaning of the two words, their roots and the derivatives. To generate is *to beget*, to be born is to be *brought forth*. Only think of a begetting and being born "meaning the same." If to beget means to generate, to beget again means to regenerate, and not to be born again. Hence Peter decides the matter when he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath *begotten us again*, [not brought us forth,] to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." I Pet. i. 3. If the two terms "mean the same," we need a new Bible to express that meaning, new Lexicons to define it, and a new order of things to develop it; for who ever knew of a person, beast, bird, fish or reptile ever being born without a *previous* generation? Therefore it is a self-evident fact, exhibited

and known everywhere around us, that to be generated or begotten means one thing, and to be born means another and very different thing. So to be “begotten again,” or regenerated, means one state, and to be “born again” means another and very different state.

Let it be noted that the regeneration is never spoken of as occurring in the future, but in both instances where the term occurs, as having taken place in the past; while the new birth is spoken of in the past, present and future tenses. See John i. 13; iii. 6,7 & I Pet. i. 23.

The only objection to my views on Mt. xix. 28, so far as I am advised, is that the language was spoken by the Savior before his death and suffering, but it is evident that he refers more particularly to the time “*when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory,*” and when the twelve apostles “*shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” And further, it is very frequently the case that the Lord and his holy writers speak of future things as though they had transpired, as in Isa. liii. 5-9; Isa. lxiii. 1-3 &c.; and also in the revelations made to John on the Isle of Patmos. As to the other text where the word regeneration appears [Titus iii. 5,] my brethren appear to differ as much with each other as with their humble servant. While one thinks “the washing of regeneration” means water baptism, another thinks it means washing by the word, another the new birth. I think if it had been the design of the apostle to convey either of these ideas, it would have been as convenient for him to have said “water baptism, the word or the new birth,” as to have used the term “regeneration;” an expression that differs radically and essentially in its meaning from each and all of these terms.

Again, one brother thinks that the text in Isa. xxvi. 19, has simply reference to those saints whose graves were opened and whose dead bodies arose; but it appears to me that that occurrence took place “*after* his resurrection,” [Mt. xxvii. 53,] and not “*together with*” his body, as he says. Another supposes that the quickening together with Christ and raising up together with him [Eph. ii. 5,6,] had reference only to the work of the new birth, and not to his and their *resurrection* together.

Well, I shall not stop here to argue this point, but leave the brethren to enjoy their deductions and conclusions, while their humble servant feels satisfied with the belief that the apostle meant what he said. I have not learned that any of the brethren have attempted to show that the prophet [Hos vi. 2] meant anything more or different from what he expressed when he said, “After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up,” &c., nor have any informed us what condition an individual is in when regenerated and not born, for the two phrases *have different meanings*. As the principal objection of the brethren to the views that have been expressed by me on the subject seems to originate in the belief that the regeneration and the new birth are identical, my prime object in writing now is to treat upon that birth, as some of my brethren seem to conclude that my ideas on regeneration amount to supersedure, if not a denial of the new birth. But let me entreat my dear brethren not to entertain that idea, for it is an inflexible

and eternal truth that “except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Such is the importance, as well as the necessity of that birth that God has, as I conclude, exemplified the principle upon which it is based in his creation, developed in his providence, and will finally crown it by his grace to the glory of his hallowed name in the eternal salvation of his people.

It is evident that the great end and grand design of God in his work of creation was to reveal himself, and thereby to exhibit his glory and enunciate the profound mystery of his reigning grace in that great salvation.

“A scheme too profound for a seraph to pry,
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

To reveal *himself*, therefore, must necessarily exemplify all the rest, for the effulgence of his glory communicated to and seen by his people is the consummation and crowning work of the whole sublime mystery; namely, to “see him as he is,” for in himself he is all glorious, intrinsically so.

“All over glorious is my Lord,
To be beloved and yet adored.”

Now let us turn to the first chapter of Genesis, and I think that we shall see there that he is delineating himself in the works of creation, as well as presenting the principle or base on which the new birth is predicated.

I shall not attempt to comment particularly on the formation of the earth and waters, their division, the light and darkness, the heavens and earth, as brought to view in the first ten verses of the chapter, which constitute the grand theatre upon and the elements by which the whole is to be perpetuated, but dwell more particularly on the eleventh and some of the following verses, as bearing more directly on the subject under consideration.

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit *after his kind, whose seed is in itself* upon the earth, &c. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding fruit whose *seed was in itself* after *his* kind.” Here we discover the grass, the herb, the tree, each containing its seed in itself, and each after *his* kind; each in itself and in its place, metaphorically and exquisitely revealing the divine Creator, the grand prototype of all, who contained at and long ere that period *his seed in himself* – yes, that very [not ideal] spiritual seed that were chosen “in him before the foundation of the world.” Here, too, we note that the masculine gender is used in each particular herb and tree, more vividly to represent him whose *seed* should serve him and be accounted to him for a generation. In the 14th to 19th verses, inclusive, are brought to view the sun, moon and stars, for *signs* and seasons, and days and years. We have here also the division of day and night. The sun, illustrious emblem of its divine author, which

not only throws a lucid glow of radiance over the vast creation, but also imparts a vitalizing, energizing power, at the same time garnishing the works of the Creator with all the beauty and variety of the rich scenery displayed, and invigorating the whole of the productive creation, causing it to grow, mature and bring forth, each its offspring, “*after his kind.*”

Had we space, time and knowledge, it would be pleasant to contemplate this beautiful, emblematical display of God and his creation by more particular reference to the literal sun, the great luminary of the natural world, as the “SUN of Righteousness” is the wonderful embodiment of “the true light” that sheds an effulgence of glorious brilliancy over the entire spiritual world; the moon and stars that, though dark bodies in themselves, reflect the light of the sun, and lessen the dreary darkness of night, as the Sun of Righteousness shines on bodies of denser darkness, as when he shone on the countenance of Moses, or the law dispensation, such was the splendor of the lucid glory that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold his face; or when he shines in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we cannot now treat particularly upon those emblematical portraits, as the prime object of our research; at present is a more thorough knowledge of the *birth* before alluded to. Gen. i. 20 - “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly, the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after *his* kind,” &c. “And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the sea; and let fowl multiply in the earth. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after *his* kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after *his* kind; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after *his* kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after *his* kind; and God saw that it was good.”

One step further and we reach the crowning piece of creation. Verse 26. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” &c. Verse 27. “So God created man in his *own image*, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Shall we now take a brief retrospective view of the whole creation? Then we shall see that a generation was complete in every herb, every tree, every creeping thing, beast, fowl, fish, and up to man, where God stamped his image, *before* a birth could possibly occur. Now, an image, a likeness in this sense, must be a complete similitude, must bear an exact resemblance of the thing designed to be represented; as when we look into a perfect mirror we behold an exact image or likeness of ourself.

We ask, then, In what respect did Adam present a true image, a precise likeness of his Maker? It could not have been in his corporeal form, for “God is a spirit,” and had no such form. It could not have been in his nature, for although it was uncorrupted for a time, it was corruptible, susceptible of corruption, and finally was corrupted, while God is incorruptible, insusceptible of corruption.

I find no trait in him, then, that presents an *image*, a like-ness, but in the fact that he contained in himself, and was the complete embodiment of all his unborn seed. In this sense Adam is an exact “figure of him that was to come,” having his offspring all in himself, after the foundation of the world, as him by whom all things were created had his offspring all “chosen in him before the foundation of the world.”

Let us pause for a moment and scan the vast producing creation everywhere around us, and still remember that from the minutest insect up to the monstrous whale that cleaves the deep ocean, or the hugest mammoth that ever trod the earth, and up to man, the crowning work of all creation, and all; all proclaim in telling notes, in unmistakable language, that the seed or offspring must necessarily exist in the parentage *before* a multiplication, an offspring, a *birth*, can possibly occur; and that the offspring, when born, must inevitably possess precisely the nature of the parentage. Hence we must know that the generation and the birth are *not* “the same state,” and therefore their derivatives, “the regeneration” and “the new birth,” do *not* mean the same.

Let us now attend more particularly to the birth; and while so doing, let us not forget the different significations of the two words, to generate and to be born, nor of their derivatives, to regenerate and to be born again. Webster says, “Generate, to beget; to procreate; to propagate; to produce a being similar to the parent.” Every animal *generates* his own species; while to be born is to be brought forth from that state of generation. Then, to be born is not to *change* a being from one nature to another. If the Lord should take a natural man and change him, or any *part* of him, to a spiritual one, that would have no resemblance to a birth, and therefore the word *change* is never used in the Scriptures relative to that birth.

With these absolute and self-evident facts before us, we at once see the necessity, as well as the vast importance of a birth, for without it a generation would be a nullity, no offspring could be developed, no descendent could have any knowledge of its parent. So also in the case of the new birth; without it regeneration would be a nullity, no spiritual offspring of God could be developed, no child of God could have any knowledge of God its Father; until we are the recipients of that spirit that is “born of God,” we cannot cry, “Abba, Father,” nor can we possibly see his kingdom. Now these spiritual subjects descend “from God out of heaven,” [Rev. xxi. 2,10] they are “born of God,” [John i. 13] “born of the Spirit, and are spirit,” [John iii. 6] “born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.” I Pet. i. 23. Under the former dispensation, or before the coming, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ, they were born of God, as I suppose, the consequence of their having been antecedently generated in him. In all the former dispensation we have no historical account of regeneration, the term is not there used, and I cannot venture to add the interpolation. In the latter dispensation those subjects are “born again,” the consequence, as I suppose, of an antecedent regeneration in Christ; and in each case, like everything else, the offspring exhibits precisely the nature of its parent, each a partaker of the divine nature.

Nor does the birth change the subject born, neither the fleshly or spiritual child, though the circumstances of both are changed. Yet “that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The flesh is born of corruptible seed and is corrupt; the spirit is born of incorruptible seed and therefore cannot be corrupted. “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.” That person who receives “the spirit which is of God” is at once a compound character, possessing two different and antagonistical natures, because born of different parents. One is born of a fleshly or earthly parent, the other of a spiritual or heavenly parent; and “as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” Each recipient of that spiritual, heavenly, or “new man,” is a subject of two births, is born of two different parents, of two different natures, and is therefore a composite being. That composite or complex being is what I understand to be a *christian* or *saint*; and although often addressed or spoken of as such, and as a simple being, it is nevertheless a compound one. How else are we to account for their sometimes being spoken of as “sinners,” and at others as being “righteous before God;” sometimes “carnal,” at others “clean;” once “black as the tents of Kedar,” and again “comely” or “as the curtains of Solomon”? The whole mystery is solved in the fact that they are born of two different parents, of radically different natures. It is a seeming paradox to say that the *saint* or *christian* is a sinner and not a sinner; but Christ at one time said to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” and at another, “Ye are clean;” and I believe that Erskine told the truth when he said:

“To good and evil equal bent,
I’m both a devil and a saint.”

In one relation they are the subjects of redemption, in the other, they “cannot sin,” and therefore need no redemption. All the evil is consequence to the first birth, all the good to the second. The seed of the herbage drops into the earth, and there is a production and growth of the same nature of the original. “The holy seed,” [Isa. vi. 13,] or “godly seed,” [seed of God in the margin, Mal. ii. 15,] is communicated to our earthly bodies, and there is an “inner” or “inward man,” a child of God, a production of the same nature of the original, a growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord.

It is certainly a pleasant contemplation for us to look around us and behold all the works of God revealing, developing, and thereby praising him; and with adoration we may exclaim with David, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” And again, “All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee.” – Ps. xix. 1,2 & cxlv. 10. When that spirit which is “born of God” has a lodgement within, it being the spirit of life and of light, we are vitalized and illuminated, and hence we feel and see – feel our malady and see the justice of our condemnation; feel

and see that God is holy, and we unholy in our polluted birth; feel and see that “the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good,” and that we are “carnal, sold under sin.” Now here is a saint, a subject of two different births, born of two different parents, of two different natures, each developing *his* kind, like everything else we see around us.

My brother, my sister, should we not take courage from these wonderful revelations that God has made of himself in his creation, providence and grace, while it affords us so many testimonials that we are “born of the Spirit” as well as “of the flesh”? It is well for us when we can look upon the light as well as upon the dark shades of the picture. Then we can say with the poet, as I have quoted in a former communication:

“What then is evil, but a shade?
By wisdom is the picture laid;
To make his love arise and show,
Its brightest glories to our view?

Nor yet could sin forgiving grace,
‘Mong all the creatures find a place,
While all were good, no room could be,
For mercy’s aid to misery.”

Brother Beebe, I have written the foregoing lines hurriedly, and by piecemeal, in consequence of professional and other matters that have occupied my time. My earnest desire has been to write the truth, nothing more, nor less, and to prove it by the scriptures. How far I may have succeeded or fallen short in accomplishing that, to me, desirable end, is submitted respectfully to yourself and others of more profound natural and spiritual attainments than my humble self. I am aware that it has been a long cherished custom with many precious brethren in the ministry, as well as others, to identify regeneration with the new birth, as it is frequently termed. I am apprised, too, that it is not the easiest matter at all times for us to yield opinions that have been long entertained and often expressed by us. We are advised also that *new* ideas are often discarded simply because they are new. All this in many cases may be very well, but in many others not so well. I have often been reminded of using incorrect expressions, and felt thankful to my brethren and friends for correcting me. They are our best friends who point out to us our faults in a friendly manner. May God enable all his dear children to earnestly seek after and know the truth, to love it for the sake of its own intrinsic value, and then to walk in it, and thereby “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”

Should this communication get to the readers of the SIGNS in the homely, weak and imperfect manner in which it is written, the anxious wish of the writer is that they may faithfully examine and carefully compare it with the word of truth, and should it be found not to accord with that perfect measurement, may they not only reject whatever may be

found incorrect, but point out the delinquency in a christian spirit and in that clearness that will enable us all to detect it. Moreover, should errors be discovered in the foregoing remarks, I trust my brethren will have the charity to attribute the wrong to the fallibility of a very weak and erring brother, and not to a design or desire to mislead.

In conclusion, I have not cultivated a spirit of controversy in this effort, nor have I the least desire to urge my sentiments, nor crowd them on any who cannot see that they are sustained by the Scriptures, and the writer alone rests under the responsibility.

Very respectfully your servant and brother,

J.F. Johnson.

Habakkuk 2:14.

Lawrenceburg, Feb. 5, 1863.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I have recently received a very interesting letter from sister Nancy Dutton, of Texas, and had I her consent, would request you to publish it entire; but as I have not, will simply try to comply with a request contained therein, which is that I should give my views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on Hab. ii. 14.

I shall try to be brief, as I am somewhat out of the habit of writing, and cannot make mine "the pen of the ready writer." I may not understand the text myself, and should that be the case, shall make but a poor show in trying to explain it to others. It reads as follows:

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

The first question for us to attend to is, what earth is it that is to be thus filled? This word *earth* is used in several different senses in the scriptures. First, it signifies the terrestrial element on which we tread and dwell. "And God called the dry land earth." We cannot suppose that this is the earth that is filled with this knowledge. Secondly, it signifies all the people of the earth. "The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence." And, "All flesh had corrupted his way." Neither can this be the earth that is "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord." "For they know not, neither do they understand." Sometimes the earth brings to view only a nation or

kingdom, as that of the Jews, Chaldeans, Romans, &c., but none of these, nationally, can be said literally to be filled with this knowledge. There are other cases in which the word earth is used in the scriptures, which need not necessarily be referred to here. One other, however, we will name, and that is the one in which I think it used in the text referred to. It is evidently clearly shown in the scriptures, by numerous passages, that the church is often spoken of as "the earth."

In Isa. lxxv. 17 and 18, it is said, "For, behold I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create, for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy." Beyond a doubt, "Jerusalem and her people," here named, is the church, the new heavens and the new earth. See also 2 Peter iii. 13. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." These texts, with many others that might be adduced, show conclusively that the church is often called "earth" in the scriptures. In Isa. xi. 9, together with the preceding and following connection, it seems very clear to me that the church is the earth that is to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. There, almost the same language is used that we find in the text under investigation. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all thy holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." In the tenth verse it is said, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious." Here we are not only shown that the church is the earth that is to be filled with his knowledge, but that the bringing in of the Gentiles was when this fullness was to be realized. If this conclusion is correct, then it follows that to the church this fullness is to be evinced; and if to the church collectively, (and we may say exclusively,) each individual member must realize, in a greater or less degree, that fullness that the earth (the church) shall be filled with. This view of the subject may induce us to retrace the steps of our pilgrimage from the first glimmerings we had of the knowledge of God up to the present moment. This knowledge is unattainable by human lore, far beyond the ken of mortal vision. A revelation directly from God alone can give any correct idea of the knowledge of the Lord. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness must shine in our hearts to give that knowledge, before we can ever realize it. It is God's gift. "He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." - Dan. ii. 21. He "hath given us an understanding that we might know him," &c, I John v. 20. But how shall I elucidate this knowledge! My poor, feeble, finite mind cannot comprehend it; my clumsy, stammering tongue cannot explain it, nor my pen describe it. If David could say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me," what can I say?

This much I can say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Still, by the tuition of the spirit of revelation we may have some faint idea of it. Look back, my sister, when God first shined in your heart to give you the light of that

knowledge, for that knowledge shines with searching light. God gives us not the knowledge only, but "the light of the knowledge." That is a piercing, penetrating light. It makes bare the secret, hidden and before unknown recesses of a heart that is "deceitful and desperately wicked." But that is not all. From that horrid sink of iniquity we discover that the baneful violence has been thrown out, the venom has spread, until its malignity has pervaded, corrupted and depraved our entire nature. "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness; but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores." All this we see by the light of that knowledge. But we see more yet. "The knowledge of the Lord" is revealed to us; a knowledge of that high, holy and reverend One "that inhabiteth eternity." O what a knowledge that is! "The earth is filled" with it. By its light we see ourselves and we see God. What a wonderful, amazingly wonderful contrast! How can two beings so radically dissimilar dwell together? Now we think the die is cast, we fear the separation is final. We may have heard of him by the hearing of the ear, but now our eye (of faith) sees him; wherefore we abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes.

But the text says, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the *glory* of the Lord." Ah, my sister, sisters and brethren all, what would the knowledge of the Lord be to us without the knowledge of his glory? We might suppose we could recognize in him "a consuming fire," but nothing in ourselves that could possibly bear the burning ordeal. And now what shall I say of "the glory of the Lord?" How shall I describe that? We have some idea of what is called the glory of men. The scriptures speak of the glory of Solomon, and of other kings and kingdoms of the earth, by which I suppose is meant their wisdom, power, wealth, majesty, magnificent equipages, &c. But what is all this when compared with those infinitely superabounding qualities in the great Jehovah which constitute his glory? Only think of his wisdom, power, riches, majesty, the magnificent hosts that come and go at his bidding, and astonishment overwhelms us.

"He looks, and ten thousands of angels rejoice,
And myriads wait for his word;
He speaks, and eternity, filled with his voice,
Re-echoes the praise of the Lord."

There is no attribute, no quality, no faculty or trait that characterizes the "glorious Lord" but what is all glorious.

"All over glorious is my Lord,
To be beloved and yet adored."

But still the poets, and I, must fail to show forth his glory. I feel as though I was trifling on a fathomless ocean, and had better paddle to shore, if there was any. We are

told that, "The heavens declare the glory of God," but yet we are lost. The simple declaration of a thing is not the thing itself. Think again of all his glorious perfections, and then think that you, the earthen vessel, are to be filled with all. How is this mysterious mystery to be accomplished? Go to Paul and he will tell you. See Eph. iii. 14-21, inclusive. "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit, in the inner man; that Christ *may dwell in your hearts by faith*; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye might be *filled with all the fullness of God*. Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." There is a solution of the great mystery, but finite minds could never solve or comprehend it. No, it "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."

But of all the attributes of Jehovah one, to us, seems to excel, and that is love. The scriptures tell us twice what God is. First it is said that "God is a Spirit," and that is the Spirit that reveals to us all that we know or can know of God. "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." He alone can give us any correct knowledge of himself, his knowledge, his divine excellence, or any of his spiritual blessings. The other text informs us that "God is love." Then if God is glorious, and if he is love, the love of God is the "glory of the Lord." The *earth*, then, that is filled with the love of God, is "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord." To know his love then, is to know his glory. Now, christian, review your past experience, and see if this view of the subject does not correspond with it.

When you was first filled with the knowledge of God, the light of that knowledge developed things to you just as they were. It did not make you that hideous, hopeless, helpless and lost sinner that you then and there saw yourself to be; nor did it make the Lord to be that holy, harmless, undefiled, long-suffering and intrinsically good being that you saw him to be, against whom you had so basely and ungratefully sinned. No, it did not do either, but it made you see yourself to be the deep-dyed sinner that you then was and had been before, and God to be the unpolluted character that he then was and ever had been. That was a heart-breaking scene, a mournful spectacle. But when you were "filled with the knowledge of the *glory* of the Lord," (the love of the Lord,) how changed the scene, how different the sensation! Your sorrow was turned to joy, your grief to rejoicing. Yes, you received "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

"Your tongue broke out in unknown strains,
And sung surprising grace."

What rapture fills and flows from the love-smitten heart! What ecstatic, blissful emotions dwell there, when the earth or earthen vessel is "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

But how do the waters cover the sea? Can we not see it? Is there a covering cast over it that we cannot behold it? Ah, we can see the surface, the bare, thin covering that is spread over it; but what is that when compared with the vast immensity of waters that lie pent up in its monstrous bowels. To be sure, it is a vast expanse to look over; but then our vision is so circumscribed that we can see but a speck of the bare surface of it. Only think what is beneath the whole surface or covering. Think of computing it. Go to the brink, dip your foot in the waters that lave the shore. You may step into it and find the water only to the ankles; a little further and it is to the knees; a little onward, to the loins; a little further and it is impassable. Let the mariner try his skill on board his gallant ship, spread his canvas to the breeze; presently he sounds; it is but a few fathoms; a little further a few more; and so on, until line, plummet and all fails to measure the immeasurable depth.

Thus, when the "earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," we have but a very superficial view of the infinite breadth and length and depth and height of the boundlessness of the fullness of God, and are again and again prompted to exclaim with the apostle, "O, the depth of the riches," &c. Like the waters that ran from the threshold of the former temple into which Ezekiel in a vision was lead, our first advances are but shallow. But as we progress the waters become deeper and *deeper* and DEEPER, until,

"Transported with the view,
We're lost in wonder, love and praise."

The inspired apostle to the Gentiles could only see through a glass darkly, could know only in part, and prophesy only in part. What will the transport be when we can see as we are seen, and know as we are known? We have this treasure in earthen vessels now, vessels that cannot appreciate the rich boon. And yet, even in the tabernacle in which we groan we sing,

"O, the rapturous height of that holy delight,
Which I found in the life-giving blood;
Of my Savior possessed I was perfectly blest,
As if filled with the fullness of God."

If so shallow a view of the "glory of the Lord" so transports us while our vision is dim and our knowledge so imperfect, what will be our ecstasy when launched into the fathomless sea of his glory, and when we see as we are seen, know as we are known, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality?

"If in my soul such joy abounds,
While weeping faith explores his wounds,
How glorious will his grace appear,
When perfect bliss forbids a tear."

Your friend and brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Vindication Of Views On Regeneration.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., April 26, 1868.

BROTHER BEEBE: - It appears that two communications formerly written by me, and published in the SIGNS have elicited some attention, and such attention in some very few instances as I regret to see. Nothing, however, that has appeared in the SIGNS has given me the least displeasure, nor will it while a quiet, calm and christian spirit prevails among the writers. I thought I had a right in common with my brethren, to claim it as a privilege to present my honest convictions of what I believe the Bible taught on the subjects of, first, the regeneration, and secondly, the new birth.

Not with the view of "leading the young and inexperienced astray," (as charged by one in a private letter,) but simply to present to the readers of the SIGNS what I honestly believed the scriptures taught. Nor did I write with any design or desire to urge my sentiments on any one who could not see that they were sustained by the scriptures. I have no wish, and more than that, no intention to enter upon a protracted controversy about the subjects upon which I have written, and thought when I last wrote on the subject that I would try to present my views with as much perspicuity, calmness, candor, and in as inoffensive a manner as my feeble capacities would enable me to do, and leave the event with my God, my brothers and sisters, without any further effort on my part. And what I am about to write now I design to be more explanatory and conciliatory than argumentative. Let me add further, that I have received many private letters from much esteemed brethren and sisters on these subjects, many of whose sentiments accord with

my own, and some differing with me on certain points, but far the greater number have seemed to exhibit a kind and christian spirit; and certainly an honest difference of opinion on these points has not lessened my regard for them, and shall not.

But I must drop a remark or two here for the consideration of some one or two brethren, (if they will allow me to claim the relationship,) who have written to me, *supposing* that they differ with me, (and probably they do in many respects,) but not in what I am charged with denying, if I can understand what they aim to contend for.

For instance, an Elder from a certain "ville" in Ohio, writes two full sheets of foolscap, and sets out by charging me with denying the work of the Spirit in God's people, and quotes long strings of scripture on other subjects, and it does seem to me that he would, if he could, prove that the Spirit does this work, which no Old School Baptist ever thought of denying; and I here appeal to all who have ever read these communications to determine for themselves whether such a denial has been expressed by me in either of the productions alluded to, or whether they have found an expression in either from which such a denial can be legitimately implied. In one part of that long letter I am represented to be a "dangerous" character, "governed by a fleshly mind, and the devices of Satan presented to it by his Satanic art, to lead the mind from Christ." The writer further informed me that he had written to brother S. H. Durand, as he was young, &c., to warn him of the danger. I hope brother Durand may profit by the warning. Now I would kindly remind those who write to me in that style of misrepresentation and abuse, that it requires time and labor to fill two sheets of foolscap with closely crowded manuscript, and that it is simply time and labor lost, for I shall not respond to such productions, especially if they are void of argument or reason.

But I am glad to say that others of my brethren who differ with me in some particulars have addressed me in a kind, brotherly and respectable manner, and such shall receive responses at my earliest convenience. Some of my brethren still seem to think that I err in contending that a spiritual seed pre-existed in Christ. I think that "he shall see his seed," and that when his seed is "born" it will be produced *"after his kind."* Is he "spiritual?" If so, when that seed "is born," it will be like its progenitor. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Can it be possible that the "holy seed," the "seed of the righteous," the "seed of the blessed," the "godly seed," ["seed of God" in the margin,] and "a seed of evil doers," "the seed of evil doers," "a seed of falsehood," are all the same seed? I think that the seed of the spiritual head and the seed of the natural head are different kinds of seed, and that the seed of the natural are not changed to spiritual by a birth, and *vice versa*. Every person, animal and plant must, by the unchangeable laws of nature, produce seed "after his kind."

If brother Leachman will please allow me the privilege, I will here "steal a little of his thunder," as uttered in the first number of the present volume of the SIGNS, page six, first column: "If there is a spiritual birth without pre-existent spiritual existence, why should not that birth as often develop a devil as a saint? It is only because every seed

produces its like; that 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' If that which is born did pre-exist, it was either self-existent or it was begotten. If the latter, it follows as necessarily that there must be a progenitor as a progeny, or in other words, that this spiritual seed must have a spiritual life or head as necessarily as that the natural seed must have one. Hence we have the two Adams. 'The first was made a living soul, the second a quickening Spirit.' It is no more marvelous that the whole spiritual family existed in Christ than it is that the whole natural family, including his wife, existed in Adam before any of them were born," &c.

I transcribe this language because I think it more appropriate than any I could command of my own.

I will here notice one or two items couched in brother S. H. Durand's excellent letter, as published in the present volume of the SIGNS, No. five, pages 28 and 29. I say excellent because I do admire the style and spirit manifested therein, and most of the sentiments advanced. But there is an apparent difference of opinion between him and myself on one point relative to the subject of regeneration. He says on page 29, commencing near the bottom of the second column, "But whether the word regeneration, implying a previous generation, refers to the truth that Christ was the Son of God from everlasting, in whom was the life of all his people, and that now he is begotten from the grave; or whether reference is thus made to the former natural or fleshly generation of the children of God, I do not now feel so certain." Brother Durand's ideas are certainly entitled to the calm and impartial attention of the readers of the SIGNS, and such attention I have tried to give them, but cannot as yet entertain the same opinion. If it were a fact, as he says, that "The children *were* (the italic is mine) partakers of flesh and blood - *were* of the generation of Adam," the sentiment would seem to me to be more plausible. But let us examine the text in Heb. ii. 14. "Forasmuch then as the children *are* partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." The apostle uses the present tense, not the past, the children *are* partakers, &c. Then, "He *also* himself *likewise* took part of the same." The word *also*, according to Webster, signifies "in the same manner;" and *likewise*, "in like manner." Then the children partake of flesh and blood *in like manner, in the same manner*, that Christ partook of flesh and blood. Why, he "came down from heaven," a body being prepared for him, dwelt in that body as a temple, thus taking part, &c.; and did not John see the "holy city," the "spiritual house," coming down from God out of heaven; and did not Christ say of his spiritual children, "They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world?" Then, I have to conclude that, as Jesus took flesh and blood, the children in the same manner, in like manner, partake of the same; and, that as there was a body prepared for Jesus when he came down from heaven, so there are bodies prepared for "his seed," his "spiritual house," his "New Jerusalem," when they come "down from God out of heaven," or, in other words, when they are "born of God," brought forth from him. It is then, as I understand the scriptures, that the spiritual children *are* partakers of flesh and blood, and not until then. It is then, as

I conclude, that the body (see 1 Cor. vi. 19,) of each child becomes "the temple of the Holy Ghost," which Paul says "is in you, which ye have of God," or in other words, which "is born of the Spirit, and is spirit," born of incorruptible seed, and cannot sin.

Am I right that Christ and these children came alike from God, that they are not of this world, even as he is not of this world; that they are and were partakers of flesh and blood, in the same manner, in like manner? If the children of the earthly Adam were regenerated in Christ, and then born of him, who is the incorruptible seed, would it not involve the idea that the Adamic man is "born over again," as some who have gone out from us have affirmed? And, if the spiritual children of God were "put forth in Adam," as some say, would it not involve the idea that he was to some extent at least spiritual and not natural.

Now I can heartily and confidentially say of brother Durand, as he has said to me in the SIGNS alluded to, that I am not afraid of affecting his love or fellowship for me by suggesting this difference of understanding. No, my dear brother, you need entertain no fears of that kind while your pen so amply testifies to the candid and christian spirit that should control all our correspondence or communications, and rest assured that as you have intimated, nothing would be more cheerfully yielded or promptly abandoned than a sentiment previously entertained by me, which is proved by the scriptures to be incorrect.

I will ask my brethren who reject the sentiment that a spiritual seed or family existed in Christ before Adam's creation, what was it or who were they that were "chosen in him before the foundation of the world?" Were they the children of Adam the first? His children are like himself, earthy. Or were they the children of Adam the second? He is spiritual, and his children are like himself, (a quickening) spirit. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Or further, were there *any* that were thus chosen in him?

Now my dear brethren, it seems to me that you must say that the earthy children were chosen in the spiritual head before the foundation of the world, that the spiritual children were chosen in the spiritual head before the foundation of the world, or that none were chosen in him before the foundation of the world. Which horn of the dilemma will you take? I ask in all candor, and with an humble and due deference to those who have wiser heads and more penetrating sagacities than your humble servant. I do not, if I know myself, wish to advocate an idea that is not sustained by the scriptures. What advantage could it be to me? My gray hairs, bleached with the frosts of sixty-eight winters, admonish me that my time here is short, and I have no desire to end it with "a lie in my right hand."

But let none of my brethren or sisters conclude that I wish to appear before them as an oracle, or as presenting my views as a criterion for others. I have no aspirations to set my imperfect self up as a guide for others. But I must retain the privilege which is the inalienable right of us all to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, according to the clearest convictions I have.

The communications of many of the brethren and sisters through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and by private letters, while treating on the subjects of regeneration and the new birth, have been to me a source of encouragement, comfort and confirmation, for which I desire to feel very thankful to him who alone can instruct us correctly, and also to them for the courtesy, kindness and labor of love that have characterized their correspondence; and in these remarks I cordially include those brethren who have expressed their opinions, differing with mine, in a becoming and brotherly way. I have not, however, been able to discover any reason why I should change my views on the subjects discussed, for while none have presented any (to me) perceptible, insuperable objections, others, together with the scriptures, have more and more confirmed me.

So far as the doctrine of regeneration is concerned, I think one text places the position taken on that subject beyond the reach of refutable contradiction. That text is found in Hosea vi. 2. *"After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."* That text taken in connection with Eph. ii. 5, 6, I Peter i. 3, and many others that might be adduced, seems to me to place the position in an irrefutable attitude. I must, therefore, according to that and its concomitant texts, believe that after those two days his children were all revived; that on that third day they were raised up, "begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;" or in other words, were then and there regenerated, (for to beget is to generate, to beget again is to regenerate,) and consequently that then and there, not at any other time or place, not before or after, not separate or apart from Christ, but really and actually "begotten again, revived, raised up, quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This, if I mistake not, inspires a hope that our life is, and ever has been, hid with Christ in God. Then let us,

"Rejoice, believer, in the Lord,
Who makes your cause his own;
The hope that's built upon his word,
Can ne'er be overthrown.

Though many foes beset your road,
And feeble is your arm,
Your life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm."

Now, my dear brethren and sisters all, if this is error, may God enable you all to detect it; and not only so, but may he or some of you by his revelation, convert your unworthy brother from the error of his way; for if I am wrong, of all other persons I am the most deeply interested in being set right.

Brother Beebe, this is respectfully and willingly submitted to your judgment.

With true regard, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

P. S. - I now hope to be at the Baltimore, Delaware, Delaware River and Warwick Associations.

J. F. J.

Matthew 13:52.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., July, 1868.

"Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." - Matt. xiii. 52.

Brother Beebe, my mind has often reverted to the foregoing quotation since my return from the eastern associations; but before speaking particularly of the text, (which by-the-by I do not propose to investigate at large,) I must say that I never attended a tour of meetings east, west, north or south, that I more highly appreciated or more heartily enjoyed than I did the four associations, (Baltimore, Delaware, Delaware River and Warwick) and the intermediate meetings; and if not deceived, did feel while there, and have felt since my return, a degree of gratitude to God, the beneficent giver of all good, for the high privilege conferred upon me, the instructions received, and the comfort enjoyed while listening to and mingling with the ministers, brethren, sisters and friends of former, and new-made acquaintances. I do acknowledge, that from letters received and conversation heard from different quarters before visiting those meetings, I felt some unpleasant forebodings, some probably groundless fears that I might be looked upon by some as an intruder, and confronted as a getter-up of new and strange ideas, that would spoil my enjoyment; but this perhaps was my infirmity. From the commencement to the close of the meetings, not one sentence was uttered in my presence, according to my understanding, against the sentiments that some of us had previously promulgated through the SIGNS on the subjects of "the regeneration" and the "new birth." Whether those who may have been present and differed with me, considered me unworthy their attention, or whether from some other cause, I cannot say.

Since the close of the associations a production has appeared over the signature of our excellent and mild brother E. Rittenhouse, in the twelfth number, present volume of the

SIGNS, in which he seems to *intimate* that something may be out of place in "the several letters that have been published recently on the subject of regeneration and the new birth," and further adds: "I cannot say as yet, that I am instructed by them." I recently published two letters, one on each of the subjects named by him; and if allusion is had to them, no marvel if one having the penetration of brother R. should fail to get instructed from such a source. But I like "great plainness of speech," and "all boldness," when treating on these important matters, whether in writing or orally. Had brother R., while we were both present at two or three different associations, "Took me unto him, and expounded the way of God more perfectly," a weak and erring brother might have received instruction of him, who had failed to impart it to him. He further says: "Some long and labored articles that we have had, seem to convey the idea that Old School Baptists have always been in the dark on the subject of the regeneration of the sinner, and have never understood themselves." If brother R. will inform us where the scriptures say anything about "the regeneration of the sinner," we may be enlightened on the subject; and further, we might then have a precedent of the great work of the professing world in the various grades of schools, and theological institutions that are so rife in the world at this time for the "conversion of sinners," the "conversion of the world." But, with all his penetrating sagacity, if he will carefully scan and fully comprehend all that Old School Baptists have understood from their starting point, even from John the Baptist down to this time, he may arrive at a different conclusion on some minor points.

He says also, "By the natural birth this natural life is received." Look at that again, brother R., and think; ponder it well. Did you ever know of a case among the animal creation, or in the human family, where natural *life* was "*received*" by a birth? This expression seems to be used in illustration of your theory; and if so, in what position does that theory appear! Dead until born! This truly is making the reception of life, regeneration and the birth all synonymous - "used interchangeably." Again he has said, "We have been heretofore in the habit of using these terms interchangeably; and it is my impression that the inspired writers so used them." Then why not give us the words of those inspired writers, instead of "we have been in the habit of using," and, "it is my impression." Now, if brother Rittenhouse has reached the summit of the hill of knowledge as to these matters, I hope he will not kick us back who are struggling after him; for he may rest assured that whatever we can find that *inspired men* have said on this or any other subject, we will gladly embrace. But again, "Only two or three have just now got into the secret." There is a kind of veiled sarcasm sometimes used which, when discovered and properly understood, may be of the bitterest kind; but I hope that brother R. has not designed this as such; and hope also that he will not think hard of me for calling his attention to the matter.

But I will not particularly examine the communication farther, as I think that other portions of it are more appropriately replied to in the editorial of the same paper, than I can do; and I will therefore briefly refer to the text at the head of this article. I am not,

however, *disposed to obscure*, and go into nice distinctions on this text, as has been intimated that "the brethren" have on others, but only allude to it in connection with my late visit to the eastern associations.

I suppose that the scribes among the Jews were those who read and expounded the law, or Jewish religion to the people; and that thus Jesus spoke of the scribes "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." Be that as it may, it is evident that the language was addressed to his disciples; for after sending the multitude away and going into a house, his disciples came and asked him to declare unto them the parable of the tares of the field. He complied with their request, and after using two or three other parables, with a short explanation, he asked them, "Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord." Then he spoke to them the words that we have under consideration; wherein "every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things both new and old." The idea of a rich and plentiful variety seems to be indicated here; and if applicable to Christ, his gospel and those who proclaim it. What a treasure! What an exhaustless treasure is brought to view in the boundless theme!

"Here's treasures that will never waste,
Here's treasures that endure;
Here's pleasure that will always last,
When time shall be no more."

No wonder they are new and old. Time, at its oldest period will be new, when compared with the old things stored up in this treasury. What a sublime, boundless and all-glorious theme to contemplate. There were the "deep things of God" treasured up in the eternal reservoir, replete with immutable and eternal love, overflowing and pouring upon his immaculate and elect Son, and all his children "chosen in him before the foundation of the world," superabundant and all-competent grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, to save his sons and daughters when lost in sin, legally condemned, and "without strength" to remedy their ruined state; exuberant and abounding mercy to mitigate the miseries that would be consequent upon the introduction of sin into the world, to alleviate the sufferings and soothe the sorrows of the laboring and heavy laden children; there, in short, were all the supreme attributes of DEITY, resplendent with glory and inimitable with excellence, all, all treasured up and abounding in the Lord Jesus, the Mediator, "That in the ages to come he (the God and Father of all) might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ."

But how new, (although old as eternity) how bright, how blissful, beautiful and new, when first revealed and subsequently developed to his needy children. I am so much like those to whom the Savior said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets

have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Is it because I am blind and cannot see? Or is it because of my native sluggishness and weakness, my imbecility and negligence in looking in to the treasure of these new and old things, that are so replete with admiration and full of joy to the way-worn pilgrim, the dependent, disconsolate, but improvident and "slow-to-believe" child of God? These reflections often perplex and worry my weak and tardy intellect; and I am even sometimes made to inquire, Is it because of some selfish and intolerant bigotry, some inexcusable and cruel jealousy for fear that others may go ahead of me in making new discoveries of those mysterious, new, heart-thrilling and sublimely wonderful developments? Whatever it may be, I am sure, if not miserably blinded, that when, by revelation of the Spirit in reading the scriptures and hearing them expounded by those who are in advance of me, I have been made to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," when those scribes who are instructed unto the kingdom of heaven have so richly contributed to my anxiously inquiring, yet feeble and unfruitful mind, that I am made to exclaim, O Lord, deliver me from all these checks and drawbacks, these clogs and manacles that are so inimical to my progress in my spiritual improvement, my onward advancement in the divine life. But never did I visit a series of meetings like those I attended in the east, without hearing things (to me) both "new and old." Indeed, I heard many new things at the different meetings that I was really much pleased to hear, and very gladly did I receive and endorse them, when they were so obviously proved by the scriptures as they generally were on those occasions; hence it will be understood that I am not so horror-stricken at the idea of hearing and learning *new things*, if I cannot be foremost in discovering them; and hence my conviction that I am far, very far behind many of my brethren in making these discoveries. But, if I cannot pry into and discover those new and old things as readily as many of my brethren do, I am almost ready to arrive at the conclusion that the old brother and minister of Ohio did on a similar occasion, which was as follows: After listening to a number of able ministers, he concluded he knew as much as them all. "That is," said he, "I cannot see and tell it as they do, but when they tell and *prove it*, I know it as well as they all do."

After laboring and toiling for nearly the third of a century in ministerial researches, I am sometimes almost forced to blush when hearing young men and new beginners get up and surpass me so far in zeal and knowledge, relative to those new and old things. But perhaps all this may be a consequence of my native pride and vain ambition to excel. Nevertheless, I must acknowledge that should I hear the ablest preacher proclaim in the most masterly manner the excellency of those divine things, and have to follow him, I would *beat him if I could* in exhibiting them in their intrinsic excellence and glory. Still, should I fall far behind him, I could rejoice that he had not failed as I often do.

But I have daily evidences that I am but an humble learner, if indeed a learner at all, and as yet have attained to but a very superficial knowledge of the transporting and heart-cheering treasure. But all these impediments and clogs demonstrate daily to me that I am

wholly dependent upon, and can do nothing without my heavenly Instructor. If I have wisdom afforded me by which to search into any of those new and old mysteries and hidden treasures, he is my wisdom. If righteous in my conclusions, deductions, principles or practices, he is my righteousness. If sanctified or set apart to the solemn work of the ministry of the word, or any other service of the Lord, he is my sanctification. Have I an interest in that precious, efficacious blood that cleanses from all sin, perfects forever his people, he is my redemption, he is my all. "I have nothing whereof to glory;" my "boasting is excluded."

I am conscious of my insufficiency, my negligence and slothfulness; for I have continual every-day proof of all this. If in no other way let me apply all my energies to read and understand, comment on and explain a portion of the scriptures, and let the Lord afford me no light, then I *feel* and *know* my weakness.

But, notwithstanding all this, yet will I, while the Lord affords me opportunity, and so far as I am able, strictly scrutinize every *new* and *old* thing to which my mind is led; and do believe it to be the privilege and duty of all who love the truth for the truth's sake, to measure and weigh all by the unerring standard, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." I know not but there is as much danger in clinging to errors because they are old, as there is in embracing new ones. Error never improves by age. The first falsehood that was ever propagated in the world is no better to-day than it was in the garden of Eden; and the latest truth that has been discovered in the history of revelation, (for none of us know all yet) is as brilliant now as though it had been known and fully understood by all our sires and grandsires a hundred generations in the past. I know full well that I as an individual have suffered more bitter persecution from so-called brethren in consequence of their tenacity in clinging to sentiments and terms, simply because they had been so long *in the habit of using them*, when they had no warrant whatever in the scriptures. Yes, I have reaped the bitter fruits of this *Spartan* tenacity, have been told in the meeting-house that I "*lied*," an attempt being made to put me out by force; a friend by my side struck with the "fist of wickedness," and made to stagger upon the seat, all because of the zeal of *the brethren* in maintaining the doctrine of "three distinct persons in the Godhead." Its advocates contended that it had been long in use and generally received; and I for one am willing to admit that it was an ancient idea, old enough to have been born from the womb and dandled upon the knee of Mystery Babylon. On another occasion a large knife was drawn from the pocket upon me, and flourished in the church, in vindication of the "means doctrine." That too was of old standing. Dr. Gill's works, old circular letters, and almost all the old writings (except those of inspiration) that could be found, were ransacked to prove that it had been long and habitually used, believed and received.

It was my fortune, or misfortune, whichever it may have been, to oppose those principles, and the spirit that usually accompanies error, or rather the fruits of that spirit, were wreaked upon me with a vengeance. The idea of the preaching of the gospel, or

gospel preachers not being used *in the regeneration of the sinner* could not be tolerated. But we have lived to see the former of these tenets almost if not altogether abandoned by Old School Baptists, and the latter consigned over to the tender mercies of Arminians, where it originated and legitimately belongs.

I know it is humiliating to our natures to yield sentiments that we have long entertained and often expressed; but when we fail to find them sustained in the record that God has given us, such humility is a noble trait in the christian character. Then whether our own ideas or those of our brethren be to us either old or new when our minds are directed to them, let us scrupulously compare them with, and try them by the UNERRING STANDARD; and if they are found wanting according to that rule, the sooner we yield, the better it is for us. Is it not possible at least for us to be found in a category similar to that of the doe spoken of in Esop's Fables? Having but one eye, she is represented as keeping it constantly directed toward the forest for fear of the hunters; but a shot from a vessel that was coasting near by, pierced her on the blind side. While we should not slacken our vigilance in detecting error in new things, it may not be amiss to keep an eye occasionally to old *opinions, impressions* and *practices*; for there are none of us that have yet arrived to a state of perfection.

But permit me, dear brethren, to admonish you, and to heed the admonition myself also, to withhold hard words, and endeavor to suppress, should they arise, and keep down all feelings of vain jangling, strife, envies, jealousies, &c., and let us condemn or justify all that can be condemned or justified by the scriptures. And should a brother advocate an idea that we can neither condemn nor justify by revelation, let it remain in the peaceful possession and as the personal property of its author, until we can prove its truthfulness or fallacy. If it be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, we cannot overthrow it.

Your brother sincerely,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Matthew 13:44.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Jan., 1869.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - I venture to resume my pen once more, for the purpose of presenting through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, to your numerous patrons, and more especially to brother D. C. Byram, of Ohio, my views on Mat. xiii. 44:

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field."

Brother Byram requested through the SIGNS, almost a year ago, that I should write on this subject; but from the obscurity of my mind on the subject at the time, as well as from some other considerations, I neglected to comply with his request, and ought probably to have apologized to my brother for my negligence. More recently, however, my mind from some cause has been led more particularly to that portion of revelation, and I cannot feel justifiable in withholding such light as may be afforded me on that or other portions of the scriptures. It is true that, for reasons that I need not here name, I have for some time past felt disinclined to write for the SIGNS, and even now feel some misgivings, some timorous apprehensions that an old, weak and imperfect sinner may inadvertently say something that will prove to be "a stumbling block" against which the toes of some tender-footed brother may be bruised. But, notwithstanding these fears, I will try once more to gratify a highly esteemed brother, and any others that may feel any interest at all in what I may have to say, provided you see proper to indulge me with space in the medium of correspondence which we so highly appreciate here. My desire is to keep out of sight the object of merely pleasing or displeasing any one, and honestly and sincerely endeavor to arrive at a correct interpretation of the text under consideration; and as I wish to be brief in my remarks, I shall not comment on the foregoing or following connection, nor very minutely on the verse before us.

My aim is simply to exhibit the *treasure hid*, the *field*, and the *purchase* of that field as parabolically alluded to in the passage; and let me remark right here that to hide is not to lose a thing, for things are generally hidden to secure or preserve them from being lost, to conceal from the gaze, place beyond the scan and out of the reach of such as would take, destroy or harm them in any way. The *hider*, of course, knows where his treasure is hid, and where to find it. The kingdom of heaven then is like, first, *this "treasure hid;"* and I conclude so effectually and securely hidden that it never was nor ever can be lost. I suppose it will be conceded by all but work-mongers, who are doing so much to *change* natural things that can be seen by natural eyes into spiritual ones that cannot, that this treasure alludes to the Lord's "hidden ones," or, in other words, the "hidden man of the heart," or "new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" constituting that spiritual house, and like all other spiritual things hidden from the gaze, outside of the range of and infinitely beyond the ken of mortal vision. Let us remember that it is *"the kingdom of heaven"* that is like this treasure hid; and if it is of heaven it is "not of this world;" and of its subjects, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." This treasure constitutes the "holy city, New Jerusalem," which John, when on the Isle of Patmos, saw "coming down from God, out of heaven." The children of this kingdom had their existence, their being, their "dwelling place" in Christ Jesus, and were

absolutely and actually (not in purpose only) chosen there "before the foundation of the world," before the dust of the earth was made, or shaped into the form of an earthly Adam. The two Adams spoken of in the scriptures are essentially and radically different; one earthly, the other heavenly; the first natural, the second spiritual; and there is precisely the same difference in their respective off-spring, each producing "after his kind," like every other thing, whether in the vegetable or animal creation, and it is no more clearly evinced in the scriptures that the seed or family of the first Adam existed in him after the foundation of the world, than it is that the seed or family of the Second existed in him before the foundation of the world, for the first Adam, with the, entire embodiment of his family in him, exhibits a complete "figure of him that was to come." I know that Arminians quibble and shuffle when we speak of the existence of a spiritual seed in the spiritual head, and that the offspring, like its progenitor, "is spirit," just as the offspring of the fleshly head, like its progenitor, "is flesh," and thorough-going ones even claim to be, flesh as they are, the producers (instrumentally, as they say) of the spiritual family. Others, who are not willing to go so far as to claim to be producers or manufacturers of spiritual children out of fleshly ones, seem to contend that the flesh is *changed* to spirit by a birth; for if the fleshly man is born of the Spirit he *is* spirit; and those who advocate that sentiment will have plenty of help outside of the little flock, and of the Bible too, to assist them; for I have never conversed with an Arminian on the subject yet, but what was "in for it." But the idea appears to me to be an anomaly, a departure from the rule that God has established throughout the universe, which is, that everything that is born is like its parent. But palpably as is this sentiment stamped upon the whole visible creation, work-mongers will oppose it because it is true, and opposed to their converting theory of changing natural into spiritual children; and they are always found on the side of error. I have lived to see two factions depart from the faith of the gospel, or of Old School Baptists, one on the subject of missionism, the other on that of means; and there are yet spared a few of my contemporaries with my humble self who well remember how eagerly the proselyting community drew their swords and bent their bows to slay the upright, and the sequel is now palpable; for those amongst us who were too *charitable* to disown the strange bantlings, are gone out from us, mingled, married and amalgamated with the daughters of the mother of harlots; and I think it not very unsafe for those who have no better way of deciding who is right, to watch which way work-mongers go, and then go the other way. This treasure, constituting this "nation that was born at once," this chosen generation, holy nation, &c., composing that "spiritual house," that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, is not the earthly house or tabernacle in which it is hid, and which must be dissolved, which was created in and simultaneously with the earthy Adam; for those are "from above," these from beneath; those are heavenly, these earthy; those are spiritual, these natural; those shall never die, these must die, for dust they are and unto dust they shall return. This spiritual house, then, is not a natural or fleshly one; it was chosen in Christ before there was any flesh; nor is it

a time one, for it existed in him before there was any time. Now, in attending to the second proposition, the *field*, let us not lose sight of the plain import of the expression, "The kingdom of heaven." It is a simple sentence, composed of words easily understood; and I suppose that when the words are used on other occasions none would fail to understand them. For instance, I know not how often when far from my present home I have been introduced to my brethren as "brother Johnson *of* Kentucky," and I suppose that it was understood every time that I was *from* Kentucky. Who could understand the expression otherwise? And yet, when this kingdom is spoken of as coming from heaven, some begin to fuss and flutter and contend that it is manufactured here on earth by changing natural or fleshly persons into spiritual or heavenly ones. If I believed so I would go to proselyting on the arminian plan with all my energies.

In speaking of this field are we to consider it and the treasure hid therein without making any distinction between them? I cannot without doing violence to the language. I think that the foregoing quotations and remarks show conclusively that there is a marked difference between the outward and inward, or old and new man, and that the treasure and field are well calculated to present an appropriate emblem of the complex character called a saint or christian. As "God is a spirit," and that which is "born of God," "born of the Spirit is spirit," and as "the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead" dwells in us, and as our "outward man" is shown by the scriptures to be the temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in, an "earthly house," a tabernacle, how suitable and significant the emblem, how forcible its tendency to lead us, yea, force us to the conclusion that the field is illustrative of the old man and the treasure of the new.

But this parable does not stand alone as being so indicative of the complexity of the people of God in their time state. We may see the same class of emblematical portraits permeating the whole book of revelation. A garden, with the fruits and flowers contained therein, teaches the same lesson. See Cant. iv. 12, 13. "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard." Here is shown one garden, typifying one church; but who can fail to mark the difference between the mere plot, or soil, and the rich variety of fruits, flowers and perfumery contained therein; and who so inconsiderate as not to observe that without the implantation of seed to produce those fruits, &c., that the mere soil would be as unproductive of these fruits, as barren as is our fleshly nature as to producing any of the fruits of the Spirit without the implanting of the spiritual seed.

Again, there is in the preceding part of this same chapter in which our text stands, as well as in the fourth chapter of Mark and thirteenth of Luke, instructing lessons for us on the same subject; and then, in the same chapters, we have the parable of the woman with her leaven and meal; and how forcibly that parable symbolizes the same people or church; and how precisely it illustrates the experience of every subject of grace! There is the meal in the vessel, no commotion, no activity, like our paralyzed natures; but along

comes the woman with her leaven, and then begins the fermentation. How striking the similarity when the "holy seed," or spirit that is "born of God," is placed within us. Then begins the inward commotion which we all so palpably realize in our experience, and which must finally be as effectual as is the leaven that leavens the whole lump.

Here, then, is one that is born of the flesh and is flesh, earthy, answering to the field; and here is another that is born of the Spirit and is spirit, answering to treasure hid in the field. So plainly is the fact that "the generation of Adam" and "the generation of Jesus Christ" compose this complex character of the people of God, taught in the scriptures, that the whole volume abounds with the most lively representations of the same. The holy writers, imbued with the spirit of inspiration, begin the record with instructions that in the bud of time, the blossoming and maturity of the fruit of creation, the great AUTHOR commenced the revelation of himself in the grass, the herbs, the trees, the fish, the fowls and the beasts; each containing its seed in itself, each producing its offspring after its kind, and crowns the whole with the formation and vitalizing of the first man with all his seed in himself, the forcible, strong and striking "*figure*," or type of HIM, the great archetype with "his seed" in himself. Then, time and space would fail me to trace the record of those "holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," who seem literally to have ransacked creation and the vocabulary of language to find emblems and expressions to present to our view the striking portraits of the saint or church while in a state of pilgrimage, the legitimate offspring of these two respective heads. Thus we have an old and new, an outward and inward man; an earthly house or tabernacle with its inhabitants, a temple with its inmate, an earthen vessel with its treasure contained within, flesh and spirit lusting against each other; the company of two armies in the Shulamite, and many other emblems and expressions used in the scriptures, making the matter so manifest that the church of Christ as a body, while led by the Spirit of God, has in all ages past felt, and will in all to come feel in the experience of each member its truthfulness.

Besides, to deny this position will lead us into inextricable difficulty in harmonizing the scriptures. One may *believe* that the soul is born of God; and if that is the case, and we sin afterward, we must sin without a soul, for that cannot sin if such be the fact. Another, that it is the mind. Can we sin without a mind? A third, that it is the whole natural man. If so, he is no more flesh, but spirit like its father. Then how are we to reconcile the two texts in I John i. 8, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" and 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." Arminians harp much upon the subject of changing the heart or other faculties, or the whole natural man, so as to make him something else than a sinner. It is the hobby upon which they gallop, or "galley with oars" on which they float when compassing land and sea in all their proselyting excursions; and they say (some of them) that the change is so complete that they have not sinned for months, and, as one said in Ohio where I once had some

meetings, "for fourteen years;" but this theory will never do for those who "groan, being burdened" with the weight of this "old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" that war against the spirit; for the Bible says nothing about such a change, a birth has never produced such a one in anything that ever was born; the experience of all christians teaches them that they are still sinners, the chief of sinners, as each one is ready to acknowledge; and the figure that the Lord has used ought to teach us that if he should take us in hand and change all our natural faculties and powers into spiritual ones, there would not be the smallest semblance of a birth in the whole process. But perhaps I have dwelt long enough upon the nature of the treasure and of this field or earth that is so prone to produce "wild grapes," "wild gourds," or some other noxious production quite different from "the fruits of the Spirit," and will try to consider, thirdly, the purchase of the field.

Of course I must conclude that the man that bought this field was designed to prefigure Christ, who purchased his people, and that was a redemption purchase. And let it be remembered that it is the field that was bought, for there is nothing said in the parable about buying the treasure. I cannot agree with Mr. Parker's theory that the seed of the second Adam or his spiritual children were "put forth in Adam (the first) and fell there, and that all that fell in Adam will be restored in Christ." Adam's children are all like himself, natural, earthy; not spiritual, not heavenly. These children are "born of God," and are spirit, born of incorruptible seed, therefore are incorruptible, "cannot sin;" they come down from God as Christ did, and when "born of God" are "partakers of flesh and blood," as Christ "took part of the same," and I can find no intimation in the scriptures that they ever had an existence in Adam or any of his children until "born from above," (as the margin reads,) but that they have ever been "preserved in Christ Jesus," and consequently needed no redemption. But the first Adam, the earthy, natural, created man, with all his children like himself created in him in the morning of time, (not chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world,) transgressed the law of God, fell under its curse, and unless redeemed that law must wreak its fiery vengeance on them forever. These, or just "as many as were ordained to eternal life," were Christ's, not by lineal descent, as I understand, but by the gift of his Father. Said he, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." In this relation they wandered off from him and became strangers, foreigners, aliens. This does not look like he had been *their* "dwelling place in all generations;" but their sins, their iniquities were charged to or laid on him, and "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," yea, "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," from whom we had strayed so far and so fearfully. He "gave himself for us," and this looks like giving all he had to buy the field. Now the voice of inspiration can say to us, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This field, these natural children when found by him were "children of wrath even as

others." He found them in a desert land, a waste, howling wilderness; but by the culture of the husbandman, the planting of a good or "holy seed," the wilderness, the solitary place is made glad, the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. The fruit of this holy seed when matured is most charming, most delightful. Here we find love, joy, peace, long suffering, goodness, &c. But like all other earth, this field has a natural tendency to produce noxious, poisonous growths; so that the hand, the vigilant, diligent hand of the husbandman is daily and nightly required to keep them down; but he "neither slumbers nor sleeps," and so faithfully and effectually will that hand be applied that he will finally and effectually destroy all its propensity to produce those baneful growths. This field is his own. His, first by gift, then lost by transgression, then his by purchase or redemption. And O, what a price, what a matchless price he paid! "Gave his life," "gave himself," shed his precious blood. O, wondrous love!

"Love moved him to die, and on this we rely;
Our Jesus hath loved us, we cannot tell why;
But this we can tell, that he loved us so well,
As to lay down his life to redeem us from hell."

But he had power to take it up again, has conquered death, and was "the first born from the dead." And, my dear brother Byram, sisters, all, if we are of those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," we must realize just such a birth. Then, and not till then, shall we realize fully "the redemption of the purchased possession," "the redemption of our body," for which we must "wait." But let us wait patiently, hopefully, confidentially. Remember our Elder Brother has said, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death." Until our vile body is changed, and fashioned like unto his glorious body, the warfare must go on, the battle must rage between the flesh and the spirit. In this conflict we must pass through the waters, and though the billows may roll high, they shall not overflow us; and through the fire, vehemently as it may blaze, we shall not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon us. The din of battle must hush at his mandate, the flashing flames cool down at his nod, and the furious billows be calm at his bidding.

"Though now unseen by outward sense,
Faith sees him always near;
A guide, a glory, a defense,
Then what have you to fear?"

The treasure is hid, the field purchased, *he will have his own.*

Brother Beebe, please excuse the clumsiness and incongruity of the foregoing. It has been written by piecemeal, and for the greater part hurriedly. My love to yourself, family, and all the saints.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Isaiah 55:6,7; Reply To Elder S.H. Durand.

Lawrenceburg, Ky.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I propose to occupy a little space in your columns in compliance with a request made by brother S. H. Durand in a private letter, that I should write through the SIGNS on Isa. Iv. 6, 7: "*Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*"

I feel incompetent to instruct brother Durand, and like I had better ask information of him; but such as I have give I unto him, and others who may take time to examine what I have to say. It seems to have been found out by many that it will not do to take all that I have written to be true, and my desire is that nothing that I may write shall be received as truth that falls short of it.

It appears scarcely necessary to notice the freaks and whimsical fancies of Arminians in endeavoring to make this and other similar portions of scripture harmonize with their theory of "general invitations," as they call them. A little attention to the foregoing and following parts of the chapter will make manifest their folly. The address in the text is, to no more than every *thirsty sinner*, just such as the Savior spoke of when he opened his mouth and taught his disciples, saying, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," which are blessed with life and holy desires - not such as are "dead in sins," and "past feeling;" and therefore the chapter commences by saying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" as Jesus in John vii. 37: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The scriptures always define the characters addressed therein. The pronouns *ye*, *you*, *your*, *thou* and *thee*, as they occur in the five preceding verses, clearly evince this fact, and the same thirsty character is addressed all the way through the chapter. The same thirsty character is commanded to "buy wine and milk without money and without price." A singular way of buying. This is not what modern

missionists teach, that much money is requisite to acquire these blessings, for they come to the poor, thirsty soul "without money." Not that works or anything else can be given by us as *price*, for they are freely given to the poor "without price." Still the conclusion would be that something must be parted with, given up. Hence it is asked in the second verse, "Wherefore do YE (the same thirsty ones) spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" It is evident that all the money theory, and all the labor or work-mongrel theory is to be abandoned, yielded up, but not as a price for the precious boon. Thus the poor, thirsty one is directed to come to the Redeemer penniless, thirsty, hungry, saying, "Nothing in my hands I bring; simply to thy cross I cling," and receive the sure (not conditional) mercies of David, (the spiritual David) who is given for a witness, a leader, a commander to his people. In the fifth verse allusion is had to the calling of the Gentiles who shall run unto his people; but he says to them, it is "because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." It is certainly the same character that is thirsty, that is to come to the waters without price, that is admonished to give up all else, to hearken to the Lord, that is promised the sure mercies of David, that he has glorified, the same YE that is called upon in the language of the text, saying, "Seek YE the Lord while he may be found," and not such characters as Jesus addressed in John vii. 34, where he says, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come;" and viii. 21, "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." The language in the text evidently shows, as the words of Christ declare, that there are times and circumstances when, and under which, he *cannot* - yea, *shall not*, be found. Some there were who once sought him because they ate of the loaves and fishes and were filled; and doubtless many in our day seek him on similar occasions; those "whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," and whose leading desire seems to be to fill that avaricious belly with the trash of this world. The truth is, "there is none that seeketh after God," until *he* first seeks and finds them; and he therefore says, "I will seek that which was lost, I will bring again that which was driven away." And Paul, quoting from Isaiah the Lord's words, says, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." But when he finds and gives them to see their need of a Savior, and reveals himself to them, then they are prepared at his bidding to say, with David, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." - Psalm. xxvii. 8. Such are directed to "call upon him while he is near;" and we are not left to mere conjecture as to when or to whom he is near. When we see a poor, thirsty, hungry, heart-broken sinner, we at once recognize the character; for the scripture says, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite spirit." - Psal. xxxiv. 18. He it is that wounds and that heals. - See Deut. xxxii. 39. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." - Psal. cxlvii. 10. And we are assured that, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And none can call on him acceptably, or "say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the

Holy Ghost." Jesus said to such, (not to graceless, unborn, dead sinners, as Arminians do,) "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" and none of his are sent empty away, for "he that seeketh findeth." - Matt. vii. 7,8.

The language is still addressed to the same subject when he says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." Who are they that sensibly see and feel their wickedness and unrighteousness? Not the self-righteous, not the blind, the deaf, nor the dead in sins, who have neither eyes to see, ears to hear, nor capacities to understand. Nay; for when the Lord speaks to his living children, he uses language that they can *feel* and apply to themselves. Such as he came "to seek and to save;" not the self-righteous boaster, but living, feeling sinners; such as he has "granted repentance unto life." But this little "*let*" has a signification in the scriptures very different from the one that is generally attached to it now. As in the first chapter of Genesis, "Let there be light; let there be a firmament; let it divide the waters," &c., and such must be the meaning of the word in the text; not a mere permission to suffer things to occur, but a direct command that they shall take place. A command as imperious as when he said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind;" or, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" or, "Come unto me, all ye that labor." And to show that such commands must be obeyed, he says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." "He speaks and it is done; he commands and it stands fast." But what way is this that the wicked must forsake? The children of God have only to call to mind the time when they first saw themselves so wicked and unrighteous, and the way they hoped to find relief, and the matter will be understood by them. Our thoughts are apt to be, when in that condition, that we have gotten ourselves into a bad fix by doing bad, and now we must get ourselves into a better one by doing better; and at it we go in good earnest. But what progress do we make? Instead of getting better, we seem to grow like the old gentleman's young wolf did, "one day older and two days worse." The poor blind arminian can get along finely in that way if he will only "hold out faithful;" but it will not do for those whose eyes the Lord opens to see the wickedness, unrighteousness and utter depravity of their carnal natures. We are made then to see that no outward reform can reach or heal the deep-seated malady within. Shut our mouths that we may speak no evil word, tie our hands and feet that we may perform no overt act; but here lies the uncurbed monster, the heart! "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." This is a critical period with us. Now the plaintive poem suits us,

"By wandering I have lost myself,
And here I make my moan;
O, whither, whither have I strayed?
Ah, Lord, what have I done?

The seeds of all the ills that grow,

Are in my nature sown;
And multitudes of them have sprung;
Ah! Lord, what have I done?"

Complete exhaustion, prostration, helplessness, paralyzes all our formerly supposed powers. Not until now can we understand the wise man when he says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." - Prov. xvi. 26. Sin revives and we die. Not until now can we realize that we are "dead to the law." Here we forsake our own way and our thoughts. Not until now can we understand and appreciate the assertion of the dear Redeemer, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Now it may be said with propriety of that disconsolate, heart-broken one, "Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and unto our God for he will abundantly pardon." Like sheep these sons and daughters of Adam whom the Father gave to Christ, wandered far off from him, and became so deeply involved in debt, so terribly polluted in a loathsome sink of sin, that the fiery law of God hurled its awful denunciations against them. The separation was so complete that it was nothing short of death; (for death is simply a separation) and thus he found them, "dead in trespasses and sins," and under the curse of the law. But, before the world was, our God had made every requisite provision for the release and return of every one of these straying and lost sheep, by the setting up of a Redeemer or Mediator, "whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." All their sins and iniquities were charged to, or laid on him as the surety of his wandering sheep, and now the mandate can go forth, to deliver them from going down to the pit, for a ransom is found. Just the ransom price that the Redeemer paid was indispensably necessary for their release; nothing more was required by the violated law, nothing less would suffice. He must give his life a ransom, "shed his blood" to wash away their sins. The law demanded it, the ends of justice could not be met without it; and therefore the way for their return must forever have been sealed, the flaming sword of justice must guard the way, and all arminian attempts to approach it must have met, as they always will meet, a disastrous repulse. But blessed be his holy name, he has "redeemed us from all iniquity;" and now hear his consoling, heart-healing language, saying, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me for I have redeemed thee." - Isa. xlv. 22. Nothing now in heaven, earth or hell can ever prevent their return when the Lord commands it, and the predestinated time arrives for its accomplishment; for the Redeemer has said, "All that the Father giveth me SHALL come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And Isa. xxxv. 10, "The ransomed of the Lord SHALL return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrowing and sighing shall flee away." They return unto the Lord; (turn away from, abandon, forsake their former way and former thoughts) and there find the mercy of the Lord, the pardon of our God.

"What matchless mercy here is found;
Mercy and pardon here abound;
Mercy to soothe sin's dreadful smart,
To heal the broken, contrite heart."

And while enraptured with the gushing emotions of that mercy, the poor lawfully delivered captive is enabled to return unto the Lord; yes, to OUR God, and there find pardon in rich profusion, untold abundance. What a boon! What a treasure! OUR God! The relieved sufferer can now say as the spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Now the question propounded in Jer. iii. 19, is solved: "How shall I put thee among the children?" And the ransomed child can say by the spirit or law of adoption, "My Father."

"Here every bowel of our God,
With soft compassion rolls;
Here peace and pardon sealed with blood,
Are food for weary souls."

And how certainly will all this be accomplished.

For the consolation of all who know what it is to thirst after righteousness, let us remember that "our God" is the speaker throughout the chapter. That he addresses no more, nor less than every one that thirsteth, or in other words, all his children who have had life, light and sensations given them to feel and see their own wickedness and unrighteousness; to whom he has revealed in its superiority, and caused to thirst for his own righteousness, as spoken of in the close of the preceding chapter, where he says to them, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Then, the closing part of this chapter assures all such, that all that he has promised and commanded will be fully and effectually consummated. After telling us that his ways and thoughts are higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth, (from which we may learn that ours will always prove abortive and result in perplexity, while his will always be crowned with success) he confirms the fact by saying, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I send it." How consonant is this language with the feelings experienced by the children of God, and produced by the Spirit's work within them, and how humiliating and at the same time how encouraging too! While they are taught in their weakness that they have no more power to command or call down the

blessings than the earth has to call down the rain from heaven, they are also taught on the other hand, that the earth could as easily remand the rain and snow to heaven, and thereby prevent the desired or designed effect upon it, as the child of God could fail or refuse to partake of the "feast of fat things" sent "down from the Father of lights" by the resistless power of his love. Each can say,

" 'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced me in,
Else I, if left to my own will,
Had perished in my sin."

Thus it is that we are "made willing in the day of his power." And when our devious ways lead us into difficulties, bewilderment, and sometimes almost to despair, we are constrained gladly to forsake them, and return to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. With what paternal care he watches over us in our wanderings, and with what endearing, mild and yet forcible language he addresses us: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." And how readily they respond, "Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God." Now they heartily hymn the poem,

"Lo! glad I come, and thou, blest Lamb,
Wilt take me to thee as I am;
My sinful self to thee I give,
Nothing but love shall I receive."

I present the foregoing essay to brother Durand, and others who may give it any attention, and cannot complain if it should fail to give satisfaction; for I am not satisfied with it myself. Of course I believe it to be true in sentiment, but cannot express it as I wish.

Most truly and affectionately your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Adamic Man.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., July 31, 1869.

BROTHER BEEBE: - Some time ago I received a letter from a brother in Indiana, objecting to my views as given on the parable found in Mat. xiii. 44, in the fourth number, present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. He gave me liberty to send the letter with my reply to it for publication in your paper. While writing the reply my wife had a severe attack of illness, which caused me to leave the papers, and they were mislaid or lost, and I have been unable to find them. As the brother wishes his name withheld I shall not use it. He asks what I mean by the Adamic man? Answer. I mean the man that is born of the flesh, and is flesh. The amount of his objection was that I had contended that there was nothing done for the natural man; that the spirit that was born of God returned to God, and that the natural man returned to a state of nonentity. Now, I want him, and others that can have access to the communication, to turn to and overlook it. If they can find there anything like the idea that there is "nothing done for the natural man," or that he "returns to a state of nonentity," the fault is mine; if not, it must rest on those who thus charge me. Is it found in the fact that I said the natural man answers to the "field," and was the subject of purchase; and that Christ "gave himself," or "all that he had," for that field? That "he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity?" Or was it because I quoted the text, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death?" Or was it because I said, Until our vile body is changed and fashioned like unto his glorious body, the warfare must go on, the battle rage between the flesh and the spirit? Or was it because I said further, Then, and not till then, shall we realize fully "the redemption of the purchased possession," "the redemption of our body," for which we must "wait?" Or, finally, was it because I said in the conclusion, The treasure is hid, the field purchased, *he will have his own*? Is it not strange, passing strange, that any one, after reading the closing part of that communication, should arrive at the conclusion that I contended that there was nothing done for the natural man, that he went back into a state of nonentity? What strange influence can be at work here? My mind has underwent no change since writing that composition, notwithstanding the friendly notice that brother D. Bartley has taken of it in a late number of the SIGNS. I do not yet believe that Christ "gave himself," or "all that he had," for the Jews as a nation, nor that they constituted "the kingdom of heaven" spoken of in the parable. But I am not at all disposed to pursue the argument further, as it has already been suggested that the further investigation of subjects that I have been somewhat engaged in, and perhaps originated, would injure the circulation of the SIGNS, and I certainly do not wish to bear any part in doing that. I firmly and honestly believe that what I have written on the subjects alluded to is fully sustained by the Bible, or I should not have written as I did; and I feel thankful, first to my God and then to my brethren, whom I esteem abler than my humble self, for the confirmation afforded me as I trust by his Spirit and the revelation given in the scriptures, and their communications through the SIGNS, through private letters and verbally. Never while my memory lasts can I forget the able and forcible manner in which our once dear and now departed and much lamented brother R. C. Leachman treated those subjects at

the Baltimore Association, in the city of Baltimore, in May, 1868. His and brother P. Hartwell's preaching there was very consoling and encouraging to me. But in brother Leachman we have lost a faithful and able minister of the New Testament, a dear friend and an agreeable companion. May God abundantly bless his sorely bereft widow, brethren and sisters, among whom he so faithfully labored. I sensibly feel the loss of such labors. God only can repair it. The co-operation of such as above mentioned, with many others, have afforded me great encouragement while feebly opposing the few opposers to the truth that have risen up among our own selves; for there have been some few even of the writers and readers of the SIGNS, (and I regret to have it to say, but the fact has already been made public,) who seem slow to learn that in them, that is, in their flesh, (for all that is born of the flesh is flesh,) dwells no good thing; but that the whole, or some part of it, is born of God, and consequently must be good. Such, however, will never be the settled sentiment of the *church of Christ* while she has the Spirit of God in her heart and his revelation in her hand to guide her. Now, rather than throw the smallest obstruction in the way of the widest circulation of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, I intend this to be my last communication for its columns, unless I am called to write an obituary notice, or something of that kind. Of course I dare not make any rash promises, for I am in the hand of the Lord, and what he, or even Satan himself, (for he is too strong for me without the Lord's arm beneath me,) may induce me to do is unknown to me. I speak of my present, and, I think, lasting intention. Let it not be understood from these remarks that I can think of giving up the SIGNS as a *reader*, for I very highly appreciate its contents. I want it understood, however, that I have no disposition to *back down*, or refrain from defending the principles I have contended for; for while the Lord enables me I expect fully, fearlessly and faithfully to contend for them privately and publicly; but I do not wish to injure the SIGNS OF THE TIMES in doing so.

I am but a bungling writer at best, and cannot think that the paper will suffer any loss whatever in the withholding Of my name.

There have been one or two requests made in the SIGNS, and several through private letters, from my dear brethren and sisters in Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Texas and other places, for my views through the SIGNS on different texts of scripture. I hope they will take the foregoing remarks, together with a free acknowledgement and feeling sense of my insufficiency, as a reasonable apology, and not conclude that I lightly esteem them or disregard their friendly requests.

If I know myself, I do desire to "follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another;" and am willing to deny myself privileges that I might otherwise enjoy for the sake of keeping "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," when that unity and peace can be had without suppressing or bartering the truth for either, or crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do

his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." This, brother Beebe, brethren and sisters, is my prayer for Jesus' sake. Brethren, farewell.

Your friend and brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Reasons For Not Writing Of Late &c.

BROTHER BEEBE: - Please say through the SIGNS to the many brethren who have condescended to notice, and some of them gently to reprove me for withdrawing my name as a correspondent from the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, that I thank them for their kind attention, and that I have been very far from disregarding or inconsiderately passing over their requests and very mild reprehensions. But who can say that our medium of correspondence has received the slightest injury in consequence of the absence of my clumsy and poor productions? There appears to be no scarcity of able contributors to your columns. It seems to me, and probably to many others, that the space that I might have occupied, and that others might have occupied in their replies, has been better filled by others.

Should I think it necessary or expedient to resume my pen with the hope of comforting or instructing the dear children of God, I am not bound by promises either good or bad that would forbid the attempt; but as yet I cannot see either the necessity or expediency of so doing, in my present benighted condition. But David says, Psalm civ. 10, "Thou makest darkness and it is night, in which all the beasts of the forest do creep forth." Thus it has seemed to be with your very dim-sighted and feeble servant for a considerable time past.

My dear brother Patman, I have not attempted to comply with your request published in the first number, current volume of the SIGNS, because I have not felt that I had sufficient light on the passage referred to that would enable me to edify you or others. I have felt, too, that I have need to be taught of thee; and comest thou to me? I hope you will excuse me.

I hope I may profit by the advice of brother C. B. Hassell in number two, present volume, but am not quite certain that you, brother Beebe, were entirely justifiable in publishing what he requested you not to tell.

May the Lord sustain you, my dear brother and contemporary, in your arduous labors; may he put it into the hearts of our brethren and correspondents to contribute richly to

your columns, comfort and instruct the household of faith, and thereby perpetuate and make profitable the SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Your friend and brother as ever, but in deep tribulation,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Ezekiel 17:22,23.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., May, 1871.

BROTHER BEEBE: - As I cannot be at the eastern associations as I fondly anticipated, in consequence of the indisposition of my youngest son, I have not without some lingering reluctance, "fear and trembling," concluded to venture a few suggestions for the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Feeble and imperfect as I expect this effort to be, as have been my former ones, I cannot fully satisfy my own mind (though I have long endeavored to do so) that it is my privilege to withhold my communications from our common medium of correspondence through which I receive so much instruction and comfort, and while so many of my *friends* here and elsewhere, through private letters and otherwise, are soliciting me to write. But feeble and fallible as I feel, and therefore know myself to be, I expect to write my views on the scriptures as freely and (so far as men are concerned) as independently as I ever did. And as to the doctrinal sentiments that have heretofore been promulgated through the SIGNS over my signature, and so far as my memory now serves me, I have not one iota to recant, and should I write again on the same subjects, know not that I could do any better than to write in *ipsissima verba*, or the very same language, while at the same time I make no claim whatever to infallibility, and am glad that it is the privilege of all to endorse or reject what I say or write, just as they may choose to do. But I wish here to acknowledge in this public manner to brother E. Rittenhouse, that I used some expressions in my rejoinder to a communication over his name that I am sorry for, and should not have made them had I known all the circumstances connected with that matter, and now think that the "old man" contributed much in framing those expressions, and hope he will forgive me. In that response I spoke of brother R. as "our excellent and mild brother," and that he regarded as irony; but he misapprehended me in that case. I had always, after our acquaintance, esteemed him as an excellent and mild brother, and do still regard him as such.

Under this singular kind of caption I propose offering some remarks on a portion of the scriptures. Since I wrote last for the SIGNS there have been many requests, as before

observed, through private letters and otherwise, for my views on different texts of scripture, all of which I cannot now call to mind; and as my attention at this time is called to a different one, in some respects, from all, I have concluded to make my own selection, hoping that none of my brethren, sisters or friends will conclude that I disregard their requests.

The passage of scripture referred to is recorded in Ezekiel xvii. 22, 23, and says:

"Thus saith the Lord God, I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent; in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it, and it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell."

Before treating immediately on the text quoted, it may not be amiss to notice some of the preceding parts of the chapter. In the third verse of the chapter it is said, "A great eagle with great wings, long winged, full of feathers, which had divers colors, came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the high cedar. He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffic. He set it in a city of merchants. He took also of the seed of the land and planted it in a fruitful field. He placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree." There it became a spreading vine of low stature. By pursuing the subject we find that this great long winged eagle represented the king of Babylon, who came to Lebanon, took the king and princes of the Jews, led them to Babylon and planted them there. But in the seventh verse it is said, "There was another great eagle with great wings and many feathers, and this vine did bend her roots toward him." Here we have the king of Egypt referred to, and both these kings or kingdoms referred to are emblematic or representative ones. We know that the kingdom of Babylon represented Roman Catholicism, or Mystery, Babylon, and I think that Egypt, the land of darkness, or "that binds or straitens, or that troubles or oppresses," is a very good representation of the second beast, or modern Protestantism; for as the Jews captivated by the Babylonians applied to Egypt for deliverance, instead of looking to God, which was their great error, so those who were captivated by the Mother of Harlots have committed a similar error by applying to Protestants instead of looking to the Lord. In both cases it was men applying to men for deliverance, and may be justly compared to "jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire;" and we now see them, as the term Egypt signifies, bound, straitened, troubled, oppressed. But a better state of things was in reserve for those whom the Father had given to Christ.

"Thus saith the Lord God." When that majestic and august one speaks, a reverential awe should arrest our most profound attention, and whatever may be or may have been our most fondly cherished sentiments, every antagonistic thought should wither, and our faith should at once seize and hold with an imperishable grasp the words spoken. The language of that voice is, "I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it. I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it

upon a high mountain and eminent. In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it, and it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." The language is highly figurative, no doubt well selected and appropriate, and exactly calculated to illustrate what the emblems were designed to represent. This *highest* branch of the high cedar first claims our attention. I suppose that David is alluded to as the high cedar, and Christ as the highest branch of David's lineage. See Jer. xxiii. 5. "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch." See also Isa. xi. 1, Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12, Psa. lxxxix. 27, and many other passages showing the exalted dignity of "the Son of David."

"And I will set it." And where is it to be set? "I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent." This cropping off probably alludes to the crucifixion of Christ, according to Isa. liii. 8: "He was cut off out of the land of the living." And Daniel ix. 26: "After three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." It was from the TOP, the most exalted position, that this "tender one" was to be crot off. "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant," &c. These different expressions are used not only to show that Christ is portrayed here, but also to point to his majestic, elevated and dignified position and character, as well as to some of the most momentous things that were done and suffered for his people. But there is too much embodied in this connection to dwell minutely upon all the particular points in one communication.

This Branch was to be planted "upon an high mountain and eminent." In this expression we are reminded of his headship to, and connection with the church. In Psalm ii. 6, it is said, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." And in Zech. vi. 13, "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a Priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." There the "King shall reign in righteousness," rule and regulate all things pertaining to this "high mountain and eminent." Not only is reference had here to his elevated position as "Head over all things to the church," but also to her standing in her relation to him, as members of his body, sister, spouse, &c. This elevation is not because of any exertion on our part, but because we are "raised up together with him, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Yes, this is an high mountain and eminent.

In Micah iv. 1, it is said, "In the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it." See also Isa. xi. 2. To this exalted mountain people are said to *flow* - a singular and unnatural way of flowing. Water flows, but it is with a downward tendency, according to the natural law of gravity, and not to any effort on the part of the water. The flowing of this "people" upward, then, is supernatural, but not by any effort upon the part of the people. O that we could more highly appreciate the eminent station to which he exalted us when,

"He raised us from the depths of sin,
The gates of gaping hell,
And fix'd our standing more secure,
Than 'twas before we fell."

This identifies the whereabouts of the planting of this "highest branch of the high cedar," not only on, but in the mountain of the house of Israel; in whom we live, in whom we have an inheritance, in whom all spiritual blessings are given us, in whom we were chosen before the foundation of the world, in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, and in whom he dwells, walks, will be their God, and they shall be his people. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation." - Psalm cxxxii. 13. Here is revealed the great mystery that has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made known to the saints, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

What a heart-thrilling and soul-cheering consideration, that the "Emanuel, which, being interpreted, is: God with us." "This (he says) is the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell, in the midst of the children of Israel,"&c.- Ezek. xliii. 7, 11; Zech. ii. 10, 11. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God shall be with them, and be their God." - Rev. xxi. 3.

"And it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and shall be a goodly cedar." Yes, it shall bring forth boughs. Now perhaps I should be a little careful how I handle this part of the subject, for by using it carelessly some tender toes might get hurt. Christ said, John xv. 5, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." Here is the same idea in a similar figure. Well, when we see a bough on a cedar, are we to conclude that a *upas*, or some part of a *upas* tree, has been *changed* so as to form that bough? Or when we see a branch on a grapevine, must we suppose that a *creeper*, or some part of it, or some other vine, has under-went such a change as to constitute a branch of the grape-vine? The next question is; Has revelation used appropriate emblems here? We contend that they are suitable figures. Then look at the stately evergreen cedar, always exhibiting the sign of perpetual life, whether rudely ruffled by the winter tempest, or gently playing in the summer zephyr, and say whether these boughs have had their existence in, and came out directly from the tree, or whether some exotic or foreign shrub, or some part of such a shrub or tree, has been so changed as to form those boughs. We still say that the boughs of the cedar and the branches of the vine had their existence in, and were produced directly from the tree or vine, in consequence of their antecedent existence in the tree or vine; that this tree and vine with their boughs and branches represent Christ and his church; that his spiritual children had their existence in him, were chosen in him, before the foundation of the world; that they are not of the earth, even as he was not of the earth, but came out

directly from him, because they antecedently existed in him, are "born again, not of corruptible seed," &c.; and we defy competition, for there can be no rational refutation urged against these facts. Yet one will say that the soul is born of God, another that the mind is thus born; and yet complain of us for not giving scripture language in advancing our ideas. Give us scripture language that tells us that either the soul or mind is thus born of God, and then you may with some show of propriety call on us. But it is somewhere said that "the legs of the lame are not equal." Perhaps I had better leave this part of the subject, or I may raise another controversy.

This tree is to bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar. A goodly or good tree cannot bear evil fruit. Fruit is borne on the boughs or branches, but is produced from the tree, and demonstrates the quality of the tree. Christ and all his spiritual children (the anti-type of the cedar) are all of the same nature, and therefore cannot produce evil fruit. "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 cannot be said of the natural man, or carnal nature, for in that relation, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." There is "none good" in that relation; without faith it is impossible to please God, and "all men have not faith." All this ado about "free agency," "conditional salvation," "change from nature to grace," is nothing better than mere *gossamer*. All this modern missionary theory, with all its appendages, ornaments, trappings and trickery combined, are nothing more than huge enlargements of man-made machinery to manufacture the same flimsy, worthless article. But "their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works." With all their tact, talent and natural acquirements, we know 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." Some of them say, "If we could not convert sinners we would not preach." No; their craft would be in danger if they could not "compass sea and land to make proselytes." We defy them to prove by one solitary text of scripture that there ever was an impenitent sinner converted to God or made a christian by preaching the true gospel, by the apostles or any gospel preacher, leaving out of the question the perversion peddled by those proselyting tricksters preached and falsely called gospel. "By their fruits (works), ye shall know them."

The fruit or works of this goodly cedar are from a different source, of a different quality, and for a different use. Their source is from God. "The Lord will ordain peace for us, for he also hath wrought all our works in us."- Isa. xxvi 12. And, "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 13. When we work out what the Lord has wrought in us, it is all right, of a good quality, and very different from the works of the flesh, or of sinners dead in sins. Their use is to exhibit the doctrine, and for the reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, and comfort of the children of God, and not for the dead sinner. The Lord's purpose in the protection of the wicked, and the duty of his people to "do good to them," is here alluded to. He has use for them in

the development of his own glory, and for the benefit of his people. They are used as a sword or weapon in his hand, with which he cuts off nations or dashes them to pieces like a potter's vessel, as well as for the chastisement of individuals, and even his own people, for their good. David says, Psa. xvii. 13, "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword." And in Isa. x. 5, the Assyrian is spoken of as the rod of his anger, and the staff in their hand as his indignation.

These fowls, and particularly migratory, carrion ones, such as prey upon other birds and animals, are frequently used in the scriptures to represent wandering, unclean and persecuting arminians, or false religionists, that know nothing of the way of salvation by grace. Hence Job says, "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen." Again, Christ compares the church to a plant of mustard, so large that the fowls of the air lodge in the branches.- Matt. xiii. 31, 32. These fowls, though under the shadow, or even lodged in the branches of the tree or plant, constitute no part of either. I have frequently noticed those birds of passage when about to emigrate. When the weather is warm and pleasant they sit in the branches and sing very gaily. But when the wintry season approaches they are heard to sound a different note, particularly the leaders. By-and-by, away they go, the leaders showing the course, and the rest following to a climate more congenial to their nature. Just as the New School Baptists did nearly half a century ago. Since that time, like vultures they have continued to pluck at and persecute us, and perhaps often used in the hand of the Lord to chastise us with for our good; for I can with confidence say that within the last few years they have misrepresented and told more downright falsehoods on my brethren and myself than any or all other societies combined, and so palpable in many instances that they have driven from them many of the Lord's children who have been entangled in their drag, who have come out from among them, so that within a few years past we have baptized nearly, if not full forty of them, within the bounds of the four churches that I serve, and two others in the vicinity.

Let it not be thought that I make these remarks by way of complaint, or from a vindictive spirit. We should bear all these things patiently, without complaining, while we are assured that the Lord works all things, good and bad, after the counsel of his own will, and all for the good of them that love him, as the apostle, and as the poet, has said:

"All for the best, then fling away terrors,
Meet all your foes and your fears in the van;
And in the midst of your dangers and errors,
Trust like a child while you strive like a man.

All's for the best, unbiased, unbounded,
Providence reigns from the east to the west;
And both by wisdom and power surrounded,

Hope and be happy that all's for the best."

The Lord has use for the worst men as well as for the best; he has use for all the wrath they can vent against him or his people; for the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." - See Psa. lxxvi. 10.

Such is the wonderful wisdom and power of our God, that he can turn the most wicked and diabolical acts of wicked men in channels that will lead to the highest order of blessings, and the most transporting and heart-thrilling joys that his people can realize in the course of their pilgrimage here, to the exhibition of his own glory, and thus cause his majestic name and mighty power to be known, felt and declared throughout the whole earth. We have many instances of this class recorded in the scriptures. See the wickedness of Joseph's brethren in first determining to kill him, and when the Lord overruled and prevented that, their selling and sending him a slave to Egypt; the wicked lewdness of Potiphar's wife in casting him into prison; and afterwards of the cruel wickedness of the Egyptians in oppressing the children of Israel; the wickedness and hardness of Pharaoh's heart in refusing to let them go; and we might mention a thousand cases similar in malignity and turpitude, forming a concatenation of events of a kindred nature, running through the whole history of the Jews, from their exodus from Egypt to the coming of the Messiah, and as necessary links in that chain as were the innocence of Joseph, his best and most commendable acts, the best deeds of Moses and Aaron, the prophets and priests, with those of all the renowned saints in the former dispensation; for one broken link, good or bad, would have severed the chain, and therefore the immutable counsel of God must have changed, which is impossible, or his unalterable decree and purpose been defeated, which is alike impossible.

But again, see the malign diabolism of those incarnate fiends imbuing their red-stained wicked hands in the blood of the innocent Lamb of God! Here is what we might call the quintessence of crime. Jesus was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Those wicked men did what the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done, and fulfilled the scriptures in condemning him. But God by his matchless wisdom and power turned their wickedness into a channel that should brighten the brilliancy of his undying glory to our view - a channel in which should run in ceaseless streams of grace, mercy and eternal salvation to his people, and thereby raise a rich revenue of praise to his immortal name. But this wonderful work of God in overruling their wickedness and causing their wrath to praise him, did not mitigate their crime in the smallest degree. They done their work with wicked hands, with a wicked design, and therefore their crime deserved the heaviest punishment. Good men could not have perpetrated such deeds; how then could those incarnate fiends have been dispensed with; and without them, where would be our comfortable hope today in the blood of a crucified Redeemer? These considerations should curb the vindictiveness of our carnal nature toward our enemies, persecuting Arminians, who strive so incessantly for our

downfall, and constitute a prominent reason why we should do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us, for it is all for our good.

But there are many other reasons why those *fowls* should be protected. The calamitous days of the destruction of the Jews were shortened for the elect's sake. Probably many of the Lord's people descended from wicked Jews that were spared by the shortening of those days; still there was a remnant according to the election of grace, a few "berries in the outer branches" of that nation that must be preserved; and even now among modern Moabites around us there may be some born and unborn. Sometimes their children, and even some of themselves, are brought to a knowledge of the truth. Let them dwell then and find shelter under the shadow of the branches of the goodly cedar, lest in rooting out the tares some of the wheat should be destroyed. The Lord knows when to gather his wheat into the garner, and bind the tares in bundles to be burned.

There are still other good reasons why these fowls should be sheltered. In Psa. Ix. 8, it is said, "Moab is my washpot;" and we know that a washpot is often needed about a house, by which the refuse and uncleanness is removed from more honorable vessels. Some of us have vivid recollections when, within the last half century, the modern Moabites have rendered us important services in removing those unclean, "filthy dreamers" away from us.

In conclusion, dear brethren and sisters, let us be patient and submissive while it is the Lord's will (for our good) to suffer them to croak around, peck and pluck us as a "speckled bird," and until it shall please him to consign them to their place, and bring us into the full possession of our heritage, transport us to our final home, transplant us in our happy land,

"A land upon whose blissful shore,
There rests no shadow, falls no stain;
There those who meet shall part no more,
And those long parted meet again.

There shall we see, and feel, and know,
All we desired or wished below;
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy."

Suppress or publish the foregoing hasty scribble, brother Beebe; either will answer my purpose. My love to yourself, family, and all the household of faith. Unworthy as I am, permit me to claim the endearing relationship of a brother in Christ.

J. F. JOHNSON.

Hebrews 12:28,29.

Georgetown, Ky., April 8, 1872.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - You will recollect that our beloved brother John F. Johnson delivered the introductory discourse at the Licking Association. I felt comforted, edified and really much pleased, and in conversation with others I found I was not alone. I called on him for his sermon and he promised to write the substance of it and send to me after his return from Missouri. A few days ago it came to hand. The brethren in Missouri, as well as those about here, desire that it should appear in the SIGNS. I therefore forward it for that purpose to you.

Your friend and brother,

H. Rankins.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., March, 1872.

MY DEAR BROTHER RANKINS: - After delivering the introductory discourse at the Licking Association last fall, you wished to know of me whether I could write out said discourse. I told you I thought not, but probably could write substantially the same ideas on the text. You requested me to do so. And having a little respite from other matters, after so long a delay, (please pardon the delay) I will try to comply with that request. Inadequate as I feel myself to be, I feel a desire to use every laudable endeavor to comfort and instruct the Lord's dear children.

The text used on that occasion is recorded in Heb. xii. 28, 29:

"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."

In some of the preceding verses the apostle beautifully exhibits the superiority of that Zion or the ministration of righteousness, over that of Mount Sinai the ministration of condemnation; which Mount burned with fire, was sable with blackness or shrouded with darkness, swept with the terrible tempest or made terrific with the clarion trumpet and voice of words (of condemnation and vindictive wrath,) thus wreaking vengeance on each transgressor, causing even Moses to exceedingly fear and quake.

"Thus Sinai roars, and round the earth,
Thunder, and fire and vengeance flings,

But, Jesus, thy dear gasping breath,
And Calvary, speak gentler things."

How wide the contrast when we approach Zion. O the transporting joys that meet us there; the lovely companions, that greet us there.

Here we hail the heavenly Jerusalem and innumerable company of angels, (or messengers) the general assembly and church of Jesus (or the first born) which are written in heaven, God the Judge of all, the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, speaking better things than that of Abel. Abel's blood cried for vengeance, but the blood of Jesus speaks peace, pardon, reconciliation, compassion and love. Surely these benign comforts and exalted privileges should inspire our highest praises, and incite our most implicit obedience. If they escaped not who refused Moses, certainly we shall not escape if we turn away from Jesus. But we should thank him that there are no death penalties in the law that governs Zion. She is to be controlled by the law of the spirit of life, which makes her free from the law of sin and death. But his and our heavenly Father has said, "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." In the 26th verse it is said, "Whose voice then shook the earth, (or earthly sanctuary) but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven." But what does this shaking once more mean? It simply "signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." Those things that are made then, are movable things, things that may and must be removed; do not properly belong to the "kingdom which cannot be moved," but have only a temporary lodgment there; comparable in another place to fowls of the air lodged in the branches of the mustard plant. - Matt. xiii. 31, 32. But what are those made things? Doubtless they are *men-made* proselytes. We read that a long time ago there were those who compassed sea and land to make that kind of articles; and the same class of gentlemen have followed the trade and practiced the same craft ever since, and very successfully too, so far as "the root of all evil" is concerned; "have done many wonderful works," "sought out many inventions," and are still improving rapidly with new inventions.

They have, therefore, new schools, new bible societies, new missionary boards, new offices of almost every character *but one*. We call them new because they seem not to have been known or practiced in the apostolic school, in the heaven or kingdom under consideration. They have shown great signs and wonders, even "lying wonders," have deceived millions, and would deceive the very elect were it possible.

They have grown vastly rich by their craft too; have literally thronged and crowded the broad road with their numerous proselytes. This wonderful progress in the acquisition

of members seems to afford them sufficient evidence that the Lord is blessing their labors wonderfully. Well, they have almost as palpable evidence in that respect as Joe Smith and Brigham Young, and therefore they have but little more reason to doubt the interposition of the hand of God in their behalf than have the "latter day saints." Although they carry on the most of their abominable craft outside of the kingdom, yet according to apostolic prediction we must expect them sometimes to creep in unawares, for revelation says, "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you," &c. When this is the case, then a shaking is necessary, is inevitable. Some of us are old enough to have seen this game played to our sorrow, but no doubt for our good; for it affords additional evidence of the truth of the scriptures. Within the last century many of these *made* things found a lodgment in the different branches of the church, elsewhere spoken of as fowls of the air, lodged in the branches of the mustard tree, of which the church is the antitype. But there are migratory birds, or "wandering stars," not stationary or immovable like the tree. Shaking, however, will soon dislodge or put them to flight. Such was the case when the proselyte makers obtained or found lodging in the branches of the church; but a portentous cloud arose, the heavens lowered, the tempest raged, the tornado howled, the heaven was shaken, and away went the birds of passage to a clime more congenial to their nature. Since then the heaven has become serene, calm, tranquil. The Sun of Righteousness displays his mellow beams, and we have been made to realize, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved. What a boon we are receiving here! And from a source too, that gives us an undisputed title to it. In Dan. vii. 14, it is said, "And there was given him (the Son of Man) dominion and glory and a kingdom," and in the eighteenth verse of the same chapter it is further said, "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom, even forever and ever." It belongs to the saints by inheritance. "And mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there." And again says the King, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," &c. And yet again, "It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Thus we receive the kingdom from the Head of all authority. But it cannot be moved. How pleasant, how solacing to contemplate its perpetuity, its permanency! What a wonderful contrast between this and all other kingdoms.

Daniel with prophetic ken could scrutinize the stability of this kingdom; could scan with critical accuracy the uprising and the downfall of the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, the then four prominent powers of the earth; compared to the four winds of heaven, striving upon the great sea, or tumultuous multitude of people, and in view of the elevation, declension and final overthrow of those mighty dynasties could exclaim with holy rapture, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other

people, but shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, AND IT SHALL STAND FOREVER," although assailed by the most potent enemies that the world, the flesh and the devil combined could array against this kingdom. The rains, the floods and the winds may dash, rage and beat upon it, but all in vain, it is built upon a rock:

"Built on his Godhead and his blood,
It stands, and hath forever stood."

"And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."- Isa.. xxxii. 2. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." - Psa. cxxv. 1. The scriptures are replete with testimonials to establish the permanency of this kingdom. Prophetic lore portrays its everlasting stability.

Immovable mountains, ever flowing rivers, rocks and everlasting hills, the most potent kings and kingdoms, the most substantial works of nature or of art, the most enduring monuments of fame or cities of refuge or strong defenses; all, all are but feeble resemblances of the "kingdom which cannot be moved." The mountains must depart, the hill be moved, the rivers dried up, the rocks rent and dissolved; earthly kingdoms may rise and boast of their invulnerability, but by-and-by they wane into weakness. The most enduring monuments reared by the hands of the most skillful and faithful artists must crumble by the destructive hand of time. Cities surrounded by the strongest defenses of nature and fortified by the most potent bulwarks of art must crumble into dust. But here is dominion and glory and a kingdom; "His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Brethren and sisters, whose hearts have been touched by the love of God, whose lips have been unsealed and tongues have been loosed to speak of the glory of his kingdom and talk of his power,

"You that have e'er beheld his face,
Can you forbear his praise?"

Here you are brought into a city of refuge indeed.

"A city that shall ne'er decay,
While time sweeps earthly thrones away."

David calls on us to inspect her invincible defenses. "Walk about Zion, go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following." - Psa. xxviii. 12, 13. Let us never forget to extol the wondrous name and deathless fame of the illimitable Builder, to revere and adore him for the display of his matchless grace, and celebrate the wonder working of his

immutable love. This is the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," and "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever."

This kingdom "*cannot be moved*." "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," and must reign till he puts under his feet and destroys all enemies, even the last one.

His immutable oath and infallible promises are the invincible fortifications that shield and forever defend her hallowed precincts. "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." Therefore, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." The potent *wills* and *shalls* of Jehovah-jireh stand as eternal safeguards to perpetuate the stability of this kingdom. Her almighty Founder has said, too, "Upon this rock (the Rock of Ages,) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Moreover, the continual presence of the Keeper of this kingdom who neither slumbers nor sleeps, defies the powers of heaven and hell combined to move it. Here he dwells and here he walks, and consoles us with his faithful promise never to leave nor forsake it.

"O Lord of hosts, almighty King,
While we so near thy presence dwell,
Our faith shall sit serene, and sing,
Defiance to the gates of hell."

Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. But what shall be their song? Well, here comes a good one. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, we have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." - Isaiah xxvi. 1-4. The trust of the subjects reposed in Jesus, the kingdom is secure. Though we prove fickle and full of doubting, that will not effect its steadfastness. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." Listen to his cheering words; "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." In our dear Redeemer and beneficent Preserver we have a catholicon for all our woes, a panacea for all our maladies. How solacing to have a Physician ever at hand who holds a specific for every disease, defies even death itself.

"Should vapors with malignant breath,
Rise thick, and scatter midnight death,
Israel is safe, the poisoned air,
Grows pure if Israel's God be there."

For many years work-mongers have been predicting the downfall of this kingdom (the O. S. Baptists,) asserting that in five or ten years at the farthest, they would all pass away and be no more. How foolish! How false! They understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. Never mind what they say. We have been advised in the scriptures that our enemies should be found liars unto us. But, all this is no matter of discouragement to us; but having so many precious promises let us "stand fast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the water thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with swellings thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early."- Psa. xli. 2-5.

Then, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Grace is an indispensable prerequisite in order to our acceptable service to God. Grace is literally a favor, but all favors are not grace in a scriptural sense of the term. The grace of God presupposes the recipient of the favor unworthy of it. How applicable to our case, and how humiliating too, to consider that our beneficent Father is continually heaping favors upon us, and yet we are unworthy of them all, not the least of which is that favor alone which qualified and enables us to serve him with the reverence and godly fear that is due to his majestic name. This grace is from God only. Godly fear, also, is from the same source. Said he, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."- Jer. xxxii. 40.

Proselyte-makers endeavor to excite the fear of their converts by telling them of a terrible devil, an awful place of torment, dreadful punishments, death, &c. That kind of fear does not constitute the fear of God at all. It is true that all this is fear, but radically different from the fear of God. It is the fear of the devil, the fear of torment, the fear of death; not that filial fear that the Lord puts in the hearts of his children, which is coupled with love, and casts out that fear which is connected with torment.

"For our God is a consuming fire." This fire terribly terrifies Arminians. I was told in Indiana that one of them said that he heard Elder Johnson make a prayer that caused the very hair to rise on his head. Well, what was it? He prayed the Lord to draw near to them; and had his prayer been answered, they all would have been burnt up; for the Lord is a consuming fire. No wonder that such a fire should terrify and cause the hair to stand erect on his head who has nothing better than his own works, his own "filthy rags" to screen him. They are all combustible articles. But the Lord consumes nothing that is good. If the saints have his works to plead, his righteousness to clothe them, his body and blood for their propitiation, they are like gold, silver and precious stones. The fire may try, but never will consume them. Our God as a fire consumes all that is bad and worthless; but nothing that is intrinsically good or valuable. Then take care, work-monger, your works are not good, but works of iniquity, and acts of violence are in your hands. See Isa. lix. 6.

You would rend the diadem from the head of the Savior and place it upon your own. Well may your hair stand as swine's bristles at the approach of such a fire. But the children of God need not entertain any such terror, apprehend any such danger. Their sins have been atoned for, washed from them with the precious blood of the Lamb. Such have experienced that "in his presence is fullness of joy," and may sing,

"The terrors of the law and of God,
With me can have nothing to do;
My Savior's obedience and blood,
Hide all my transgressions from view."

A fire like this is of incalculable value, to the saints.

But what sort of a fire is this? The Lord of hosts has said, "Who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he appeareth? Not the work mucks; for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness."- Mal. iii. 2, 3. That is just such a fire as the children of God need. They see so much imperfection in themselves. Silver and gold before purified, are usually blended with dross or alloy; to consume which they are subjected to the test of fire. In purifying the precious metal the metallurgist subjects the ore to a strong heat in a crucible or furnace, and it is said that he does not consider the process complete until he beholds his image in the fused gold as in a mirror. Thus it certainly will be with saints, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." We may rest assured therefore, that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." But while in the flesh we have much of a mixture similar to dross in metals, so that each one of us is ready to say, "If I pray or hear or read, sin is mixed with all I do." But how thankful should we be that we have a never-failing purifier. Sometimes this purifying process is very distressing, nevertheless, it is indispensable, we need it, and Paul says, "My God shall supply all your need." He, therefore, "Whose fire is in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem" is amply qualified to perfect the process.

Then, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."- 1 Peter iv. 12, 13. Rather than be discouraged then at the hot ordeal through which we must pass here, let us rejoice, for,

"Trials make the promise sweet;
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring us to his feet;

Lay us low and keep us there."

Then why yield to despondency? We are thus afforded an additional evidence that we are joint heirs with Christ, "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

The Lord says, "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."- Isa. xlviii. 10. The great work of purification was complete in Jesus (but not in us) when he "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." Yes, by that one offering he perfected forever in the eye of the righteous law of God them that are sanctified; but it is ordained that we should know the "fellowship of his sufferings," and "fill up, that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, which is the church." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." The fiery trials and conflicting scenes through which we go here are necessary, and with all other things, work together for our good. David says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word;" and again, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." - Psa. cxix. 67, 71. All those things teach us the necessity and value of the antitypical refiner's fire and fuller's soap.

Then, let not the "consuming fire" terrify us, nor its heated ordeal extort one word of complaint, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The afflictions of Job were no doubt emblematical of the trials through which the church in after ages must necessarily pass, and the end of those afflictions a fit portrayal of the ultimatum of the fiery trials of the church. His complaint was bitter, his stroke heavier than his groaning. "But (said he) he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." When the tried and careworn pilgrim shall have passed through the furnace of affliction, when the Refiner's fire shall have reached its terminus, when the kind arm of God is reached down to pluck us as brands from the last burning, and mortality is swallowed up of life, then each vessel of mercy will exhibit the complete image of the Purifier, and then radiant with the effulgence of his glory, filled with his fullness, ecstatic with his boundless felicity we shall realize indeed that, "In his presence is fullness of joy; at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

"There saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Savior and brethren transported to greet;
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

My dear brother, I have tried to comply with my promise made to you, and however the foregoing remarks may differ in phraseology from the original discourse, I think the general sentiment is about the same. If this should satisfy you I shall be remunerated. I have had to write by piecemeal, and hope you will excuse the incoherency of style.

Your brother most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Account Of The Breaking Of The Author's Arm &c.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., April 21, 1873.

BROTHER BEEBE: - About the middle of November last I got my right arm broken just above the wrist, and therefore have not been able to write since then, until very recently, and quite clumsy now. I had nearly finished a communication written for the SIGNS, on the seventh chapter of Daniel. It therefore remained unfinished until the 15th of March, when the terrible fire, of which you have heard, broke out in our town, destroying sixty odd buildings, or near four-fifths of the entire town. One house belonging to me, and one-half of the one in which my son-in-law, Mr. Thomas, and self lived, also belonging to me, were both consumed, with all my clothing except what I wore from home, (being absent at the time) together with my furniture, books, and nearly everything else that I had in the house were destroyed by the flames, and also my stable, carriage and wood houses, with about forty dollars in money that I had collected for the SIGNS. I cannot recollect the names of all by whom the money was paid, as my memorandum was consumed, and as soon as I can ascertain I will either send or bring to you the money.

I had concluded after the calamity that I would have to deny myself the privilege of being at the eastern associations, but have since concluded, if the Lord will permit me, to visit them.

This may inform sister Dudley, of Missouri, that when convenient I hope to be able to comply with her request, but wish her to let patience have its perfect work.

As my hand and wrist are paining me, I cannot write more now.

Your brother, I hope, in indissoluble bonds,

J. F. JOHNSON.

An Interesting June Meeting.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., July 26, 1873.

BROTHER BEEBE, BRETHREN AND FRIENDS: - The next day after my return from the eastern associations I met with the brethren at Goshen Church, in this county, at one of our annual June meetings. Elders A. B. Nay and J. A. Johnson of Indiana were with us, and we had a very pleasant meeting on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. On Wednesday afternoon following we had a meeting in Rough-and-Ready, and the great pleasure of meeting our dear brother Wm. L. Beebe, in company with the above named brethren. Then on Friday following our annual meeting commenced at Little Flock, where the three brethren for three days administered the gospel of the grace of God, to the joy and edification of the saints who were there, but a stumbling-block to workmongers.

On Monday brethren Nay and Johnson took the cars homeward, and I accompanied brother Beebe to Lexington, where we met my son, and all dined with brother and sister T. P. Dudley, after which Joseph again took the cars for home, brother William and myself remaining, and spent the afternoon and night very pleasantly with brother and sister Dudley, sister Childs and others. On Tuesday morning we set out for Georgetown, in company with brother James Dudley, and after arriving there, again had the pleasure of hearing our dear brother Beebe proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to us, after which we took dinner together at brother J. Talbot's, and soon after came the sad hour of separation. Brother Wm. L. proved to be a dear companionable brother to me. At the late associations east was the first personal acquaintance I had with him, and I have since wished that we could be oftener together, if the Lord would have it so. Since then I have been engaged in filling my several appointments, and other matters, and this seems to be my first opportunity to comply with the requests of many brethren and friends to write to them through the SIGNS after my return home. My dear friends, I hope I was not insensible to the kindness and courtesy shown me while with you, and shall remember with gratitude the tokens of friendship and fellowship extended to me, a very unworthy sinner, on so many occasions.

I met there several of the careworn heralds of the cross with whom I had been formerly acquainted, and others younger whom I had not seen in the flesh before. But again, I had the unspeakable pleasure of meeting and forming acquaintance with many dear young sisters and brothers, which caused my heart to overflow with joy, as I thus

received additional testimonials of the faithfulness and favor of our dear Redeemer in perpetuating his kingdom. They seemed so much devoted too, to his cause and kingdom. May the Lord preserve, support, and enable them to hold on their way, and with clean hands to grow stronger and stronger. I was often reminded of the predictions of our enemies which I have been hearing all my lifetime, including Benedict, the historian, that before his stereotype edition would have time to reach the distant parts of our own country, the Old School Baptists would be numbered among the things that were. This, however, affords us no uneasiness, but gives us additional evidence of the truth of revelation, which says that our enemies shall be found liars unto us, &c.- Deut. xxxiii. 29. Recently the Arminian Baptists have gotten up a new ruse, and seem to have a particular reverence for the name "Old School Baptists." Many in this country who have been decoyed away from the truth by them are leaving them, and I suppose they think there must be something sacred in the name, and are therefore claiming that they are the Old School Baptists. Let them have it if they want it. I care nothing about the name. They imposed it upon us in the first place, saying we were five or six hundred years behind the times; and when we agreed to bear it, with the understanding that the word School should have no reference to their new schools of divinity, as brother Trott said in the SIGNS, which they lately have perverted, making him say, "We assume the name Old School," which name they have tried to disgrace us with for about forty years, after giving it to us as a reproach, as their members know. Again I say, let them have it, if while eating their own meat and wearing their own apparel they think that being called by our name will take away their reproach from among men. But they will find that there is more than a mere *name* required to give them credibility with the people of God; we want "truth in the inward parts," which precious jewel they lack shamefully. Let them lie and steal all they can under the influence of their father, who was a liar from the beginning.

"We laugh to scorn his cruel power,
While by our Shepherd's side;
The sheep he never can devour,
Although he may divide."

But to return to my narrative. I attended first the Baltimore Association, in Maryland, then the Delaware, in Delaware, the Delaware River, usually held in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the Warwick, in New York, the Chemung, in Pennsylvania, and Western Conference, in Western New York, besides many other meetings at different churches in the intervals of the above named associations, and frequently in company with the ministering brethren from different and distant locations, and hearing them preach many, very many discourses. I did not discover a jarring note or conflicting sentiment in the whole program. There were as many as twenty ministers at the Warwick Association, and perhaps I heard as many as thirty or forty sermons at the different meetings, without a

discordant sound. We hailed from Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Maine, Illinois and Kentucky. Many of these traveled many hundreds of miles and had no modern missionary fund to go to for an outfit, no newly gotten up Theological Schools to prepare them for the ministry, but with the Spirit in their hearts to prepare, and their Bible in their hands as the man of their counsel, to direct them, were enabled to lift up their voices together, and with the voice together sing.

We defy the arminian world, new-fangled Baptists and all, with all their pretended scholastic divinity, directors and boards, to produce anything resembling a parallel case. No two of their spouters can preach without producing confusion, and it would be rare for one to go through his lesson without serving up a dish of Babel as he went. But this unity was manifest not only among ministering brethren that attended these meetings, but there were private members there from most of the states named, and their social intercourse was all harmony, giving the most satisfactory and consoling evidence that "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," characterized the proceedings of the entire family. The solace I received in witnessing on so many occasions how good and how pleasant it is for the saints to dwell together in unity will be fondly remembered by their unworthy servant as long as he has a memory.

Since my return I have had several pleasant interviews and meetings with the churches here, and the same harmony that prevailed at our eastern meetings was realized here. In conclusion I will say to all the dear saints, "Pray for the peace of Zion; they shall prosper that love her." The four churches that I have the honor to serve for the last ten and thirteen years have been blessed with an unusual degree of peace, love, and fellowship during the whole time, so that an arminian Baptist preacher on witnessing the same at one of our meetings, was frank to acknowledge that it made him feel bad to think of his own churches, because he could not find such love and fellowship amongst them. Of course he could not find it, because it does not exist there. Their worldly interests and sectional prejudices outweigh their religion and TEKEL is visible in all their new-fashioned performances. The saints are taught to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and while their secular preferences are but secondary matters, they must yield to the first. But, brethren, when having had a long reign of peace, is there not danger of our failing to appreciate the precious boon as we should? Let us be careful to guard against such negligence; and let us, my dear brethren in the ministry, remember daily the wholesome admonition of the apostle who says, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." Made you overseers? Yes; but not to rule, for we, are servants. Not to lord it over the Lord's heritage, but our oversight is to consist in feeding the church, and we should be very careful as to the quality of food we administer. The body and blood of the Redeemer is to be the meat and drink of his church, the sincere milk of the word is to constitute their rich repast.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all."

Your brother affectionately,

J. F. JOHNSON.

The Rest That Remains To The People Of God.

Lawrenceburg, Anderson Co., Ky.

BROTHER BEEBE: - While attending the associations in your vicinity last summer, sister M. A. Watkins, of Bradford County, Pa., requested me to write through the SIGNS my views on the rest that remains to the people of God, as spoken of in the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. Judging from my present feelings, I do not flatter myself that sister W., or anyone else, will receive much profit from what I may write.

The first part of the chapter is very intimately connected with the closing part of the third. There we have an account of the disobedience and unbelief of the children of Israel after their miraculous deliverance from their Egyptian bondage, in view of which the Lord swore that they should not enter into his rest. The apostle referring to them as an example, reminds us of their unhallowed provocation, the terrible consequences and the direful destruction of those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. Then comes the admonition in the beginning of the fourth chapter, "Let us, therefore, fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." The saints should recoil at the idea of even seeming to come short of so benign a promise; for seeming to come short of it is seeming unbelief, and calculated not only to mar our own peace, disturb our own rest, but to affect in a degree the fellowship of the brethren and strengthen the hands of Arminians. No doubt but many of the children of God now seem to come short of that promise by remaining among the New School Baptists and among the daughters of Mystery, Babylon. The apostle then says to his brethren, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." If Arminians could believe that faith is the gift of God, and that all men have not faith, they would surely blush and be ashamed of their incessant efforts to "convert sinners to God," or to "evangelize the world," by preaching what they miscall gospel. Can they believe that the word preached does not profit unless it is "mixed with faith." And how is it to be mixed with faith in them that have not faith? Faith is given us as a hand by which we lay hold of the promises, as a

mouth by which we feed upon them; in fact it is the only faculty we have to serve as a recipient of the promised rest, and it is by faith we enter into it. Having this "substance of things hoped for," this "evidence of things not seen" by mortal vision, the weary saint ceases from his labors, sits down under the shadow of the prolific fruit-tree, serenely rests and rapturously sings,

"I spurned his grace, I broke his laws,
And yet he undertook my cause;
To save me though I did rebel,
My Jesus hath done all things well."

O what repose! What a heart-soothing solace when the sin-stricken, weary, heavy-laden, laboring child can quietly repose in green pastures, and sing with joy while immersed in overwhelming and unchanging love.

"Here's rest for the weary, here's heart-thrilling pleasure,
Here's glory and grace in a lasting abode;
Here life, love and bliss in an unwasting treasure,
Eternally flow from the fullness of God."

"For we which have believed do enter into rest." Here we learn what constitutes the rest of the people of God. It is to believe in Jesus, seeing that he has finished the work that we have tried in vain so long to do. Ah, say the devotees of Mr. Campbell, "That's it; believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That is easily done." Yes, that much seems easy even for devils, for they "believe and tremble;" but that belief merely, gives neither work-mongers or devils any real rest, and is of a very different character or quality. The children of God believe not according to a fickle fancy of the carnal mind, but are taught by the Holy Spirit that it is the work of God that they believe on Jesus. They therefore learn of the Father, come to Jesus, and believe according to the working of his (the Father's) mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. It is "given them to believe," as well as "to suffer for his sake." Yes, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, and no power inferior to that, is adequate to the working of that belief in the children of God to give them rest. It is more, then, infinitely more than a mere formal assent or historical belief that men and devils exercise under the influence of external evidence or outside causes. It is the result of an inward work of the Spirit of the Lord, unseen by mortal vision, unaided by mortal labor or scientific research, but felt, deeply felt by the subject upon whom that power operates. Thus it produced "the faith of the operation of God," "the faith of God's elect," and is peculiarly and exclusively theirs. It is not their province to "act (this) faith," but it actuates them, for it is an active working principle, producing wonderful and beneficent works, for it works by love, (Gal. v. 6,)

purifies the heart, (Acts xv. 9,) it wrought effectually with the works of Abraham, (James ii. 22,) and the result of that faith is wonderful indeed; and perhaps no transition in this life is more remarkable, thorough and complete than that produced by the working of this belief in the children of God.

Previous to the reception of this reviving principle, we find no rest. The weary, wandering, working outcast toils and labors languidly, but incessant labor gives no rest. Nay, it but exhausts the feeble, failing powers, or proves that we are powerless. Impending dangers everywhere threaten us; the wilting, withering anathemas of a righteous, sin-avenging law seems ready to pour down its terrible streams of wrath upon us for our repeated violations of his holy precepts, while stern inflexible justice cries, "Pay me that thou owest," and while the enormous debt stands out with stern demands against us, we realize that we have naught to pay. Now the awful Judge seems to frown with a dreadful scowl upon us, miserable forebodings fill us with dismay and terror, and a wretched state of deep despair appears to be our inevitable fearful doom; we hunger, thirst for righteousness to meet the rigorous demands of that righteous law, but alas; all we have is as valueless as "filthy rags." We mourn in bitterness, but comfort is gone from us, and the last, lingering, forlorn hope wilts down in weakness, and we cry, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Thus the sin-stricken captive, the heart-broken penitent, bound fast in the fetters of sin, longs for deliverance with an anxiety that exceeds all other desires, and is prepared to appreciate the rest that is "prepared for the people of God."

And now the acceptable time, the day of salvation, when Jesus speaks, as I trust he did near a half century ago to a poor, downcast, helpless, lost sinner, "The Master is come and calleth for thee;" or perhaps to another, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee;" and if no words are suggested, the emotion, the sensation is realized; the heart, the eye is given that longs for and looks to Jesus, and in him we find the long desired, long sought for rest.

Now we cease from our own work as God did from his; and as the Spirit unfolds to us the glorious mystery that Christ has done all for us that the law required, and done it well, we see the imbecility, the worthlessness of our own toil and labor, and "lie down in green pastures." The awful dangers that seemed to threaten, the angry cloud that lowered from Sinai has vanished from the gloomy heavens, having spent all its force and fury upon the Son of God, when the day of vengeance was in his heart and the year of his redeemed had come. The heavens are calm, serene and brilliant, while the mellow and cheering light of the Sun of Righteousness gilds and brightens all the scene around us; all creation seems to be vocal in his praise. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Yes,

"His glory shines where'er we gaze,
With thrilling joy we chant his praise;
Enraptured, charmed and filled with love,

An earnest of the joys above."

And now we are prepared to exclaim with the psalmist, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power."

The features of Justice now have changed! Placid, serene, satisfied. No flaming sword now threatens us; no stern demands for payment now; its claims have all been met, the whole debt canceled by the "Surety," and Justice now with propriety can say, Deliver that soul from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom. That terrible frown that seemed to flash with indignation from the face of the Judge, has given place to the most benignant smile, and instead of those alarming fears and dismal forebodings that caused us to tremble and quail before him, we eagerly flee to him as a welcome refuge, "as a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;" and where that dismal state of deep despair hung like a frightful incubus upon our sin-burdened mind, that dread has given place to that everlasting consolation and good hope through grace; hope, that as a sure anchorage has entered into that within the vail, whither the forerunner has for us entered. "A hope so much divine may trials well endure." The hungering, the thirsting, the gaunt famine, is followed by "a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined." The hungry is filled with the bread of life, and a plenitude of living water wells up into everlasting life, while the cheering voice of the bountiful giver is heard with rapture, "Eat, O friends; drink abundantly, O beloved." Instead of the flimsy fig-leaf, or the tattered filthy rags with which we once tried in vain to conceal our nakedness, the spotless and seamless robe wrought out on Calvary is placed upon us, and,

"Lest the shadow of a spot,
Should on my soul be found,
He took the robe the Savior wrought,
And cast it all around."

We may now join the laudations with Isaiah and say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." - Isa. lxi. 10.

A little while ago we mourned in deep despondency, wept with the gall of bitterness; but now we have "the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Our sorrow is turned into joy, "For his anger endureth for a moment; in his favor is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." - Psalm xxx. 5.

That poor captive exile that lay bound in fetters, incarcerated in the gloomy prison, is made to hear the voice of its great Deliverer, "He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn." - Isa. lxi. 1, 2. And thus "the captive of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered." - Isa. lix. 25. This is a given rest. Said Jesus, "I will give you rest." Perhaps the rest is never so sweet, never relished with such heavenly rapture, such emotions of joy during our whole pilgrimage, as when we for the first time enter into it, for now it is a most acceptable time, now it is with us, "The day of salvation." There has been a lesson taught us while passing through this dreary, waste howling wilderness that we can never forget. But consoling as it is, it is only an earnest, a foretaste of the never-to-be-forgotten rest that still remains for the people of God. It is a lovely Sabbath morning indeed, when we are first brought to the banqueting house, where we for the first time realize the banner playing in the bracing breeze of love, and are made to sit down under the cooling, quieting shade of the apple tree, and feast upon the plenitude of its delicious food with delight. This is the christian's Sabbath, the anti-type of the former Jewish Sabbath, and while we keep it according to the true spirit of it, is a day of complete rest, and is not confined to anyone particular day of the week. How completely it corresponds with the type, and how radically different from the so-called Sabbath that Arminians prate so much about. It is well for them that the law of Moses is not in force, and not summarily executed against them now. Had they lived in the days of Moses and kept such a Sabbath as they now keep, death would have been their inevitable doom. The word Sabbath signifies rest, and Moses commanded that it should be kept in strict accordance with its meaning. Compare their Sabbath keeping with that commanded by the Jewish lawgiver. Moses commanded that no work was to be done on that day by man, woman or animal. Every man was to abide in his house or place, and no man was to go out of his place on the seventh day. - See Exodus xvi. 23-29, and xx. 10, 11. How does this agree with the keeping of the Sabbath by those workmongrel arminians that are so continually carping about the keeping of the Sabbath? Moses says, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work," but they can indulge in laziness and lounging six days, (perhaps afford to write out a sermon). But the Sabbath (as they call the first day of the week) is their most incessant working day, on which they labor for the most of their living. It is said that one in our vicinity charged his dupes twelve dollars a sermon and preached two sermons a day, which would be twenty-four dollars for his Sabbath day's labor. How would he have fared under Moses' rule? He says, "Whosoever doeth any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death." - See Exodus xxxi. 14, 15. They know nothing of the christian's Sabbath. From the time that the children of God believe in Jesus they cease from their own works as God did from his, while they have a correct view of the finished work of Jesus; and that constitutes their only Sabbath, their happy day of rest. But those Babel-builders have no such rest, for their whole theory

presents one continual din of labor. They work for salvation, or aim to, on Moses' plan; but not knowing him they follow in the wake of those who "transgressed the commandment of God by their traditions." They must work to get their religion, work to keep it, work to support it, and so far as the christian's Sabbath is concerned, they are the most incessant Sabbath-breakers in the whole country. They cannot appreciate the rest of the people of God, because they are unacquainted with the wearisome toil, the heavy load that tires and weighs down the saint. David says of such, "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men." But the wayworn child of grace, the "afflicted and poor people," would famish and fall but for their trust in the Lord for the promised rest.

After a toilsome and laborious day, how sweet is rest! Food is only relished when we are hungry, drink when thirsty; so the rest that remains to the people of God is doubly welcome, refreshing, invigorating, especially after toiling, laboring, heavy-laden, they all at once hear the soothing voice of the good Shepherd saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Enjoying this refreshing rest, they wait upon the Lord, renew their strength, mount up with wings as eagles, run and are not weary, walk and faint not. "And in that day (of rest) there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious." The poor arminians can work too, but find no rest. Their works, however, are of quite a different character. Their objects, their aims, their interests and their ends are all different. The object of the one is self-aggrandizement; that of the other is to glorify God. The aims of the one are to exalt, eulogize and puff up self; those of the other to extol, praise and magnify their blessed Lord. The interests of the one are the accumulation of worldly emoluments, worldly fame, worldly renown and worldly splendor. The interests of the other are heavenly-mindedness, self-humiliation to bear the cross.

"Their former gain they count their loss,
And nail their glory to his cross."

In short, selfishness drives the whole machinery of the worldly religionists, from their starting point to the consummation of their whole theory. Their prime object is to work themselves out of a bad place into a better one; to keep away from hell, and get to heaven.

But what a contrast is seen when we behold the objects, aims, interests and ends of the dear children of God. Having been taught the sinful propensity of their depraved nature, and that the depraved propensity still lingers and works in their fleshly nature, they desire to keep under their body, bring it into subjection to the law of Christ, deny themselves, take up the cross and follow their Redeemer; and when they can extol, adore, praise, reverence and love his precious name and cause and children; they most highly appreciate a rest from the temptations, toils, tribulations, doubts and fears that so often

assail and annoy them; and how sweet and welcome the repose that falls from the consoling lips of Jesus, "I will give you rest." Yes, sweet and welcome rest.

"A rest that calms the troubled breast,
The prelude of eternal rest;
A calm and solacing repose,
An antidote for mortal woes."

My dear brethren, sisters, and fellow-laborers in the cause of the dear Redeemer, if we have once realized, entered into and enjoyed this rest, let the fact console us that it shall remain for us. However wearisome our journey through this careworn life, however rugged and thorny our pathway, however burdensome our pilgrimage, Jesus will still give rest, and always at an acceptable time. It is often interrupted, often lost sight of in the distance that lies beyond the scan of our mortal vision, but is safely secured to us in Jesus. And while no works or means or instrumentalities of ours can secure or retain it, yet at every time of need, by reigning grace we enter into rest. No enemy so potent, no circumstance so formidable as to rob us of our rest, for Jesus reigns over all, and must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Principalities and powers, spiritual wickedness in high places, the world, the flesh and the devil, with all his leagues and legions, may stand in hostile array against us, but one by one all will be crushed under the tread and in the triumphal march of the King of kings and Lord of lords, until the last one is swallowed up in victory.

"Then eternal repose in the land of the blest,
With the charm of a calm and immutable rest;
When enraptured with bliss, with celestial renown,
With a halo of glory the Savior we'll crown."

Brother Beebe, the foregoing remarks are at your disposal, and if published, dedicated to sister Watkins, and all the dear saints who may consider them worthy their perusal.

In conclusion I will say by way of apology to sister Dudley, of Missouri, and a brother of West Virginia, both of whom requested (earnestly) my views through the SIGNS on two different texts of scripture, that after some hesitation in my own mind, I did conclude to try to comply with those requests, but in consequence of other engagements and considerable traveling I have lost sight of the texts, forgotten what they were, and even the name of the brother who made "An appeal to Elder J. F. Johnson of Kentucky." I think the papers containing the requests were consumed in our disastrous fire at Lawrenceburg, for in looking over my file I do not discover them. I hope they will forgive me.

With earnest desire for the peace and prosperity of Zion, I still remain as I humbly hope, Your brother devotedly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

I Corinthians 13:13; “Faith, Hope, Charity.”

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Oct. 30, 1874.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - I have not thought it expedient for some time past to encumber your columns with any of my poor productions, and now that I have taken my pen for that purpose, I know not but that I had better lay it aside for several reasons that perhaps need not be named. I will, however, name a prominent one, which is that you seem to have plenty of correspondents more capable to instruct and comfort the saints than I think myself to be. Waiving those texts that my brethren, sisters and friends have requested me to write on, and apologizing to them, as I have felt incapacitated to do them justice, I have concluded to select one myself, which, however, may reach as far beyond my feeble capacity as the rest, for often when I look into the scriptures a dark pall seems to be thrown over me, that makes me fear that I know nothing as I ought to know it. I will, however, refer the readers of the SIGNS to that portion of the faithful record found in the 1st epistle to the Corinthians xiii. 13, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Shall we consider the three articles brought to view in the text as they there appear? Let us then consider:

1. FAITH. What is faith? What its origin, its use, its evidence, its trials and its triumphs? As to what faith is, the apostle says it "is the substance (ground or confidence in the margin) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."- Heb. xi. 1. It is, therefore, not a mere belief that there is a God, or that Jesus is the Son of God. But the groundwork of it is a confiding trust and confidence in what God has done for us, to save, defend and comfort us. To save us, faith assures us that he has done all things well. To defend, it is an impenetrable shield. To comfort, it is a complete directory to Jesus, our only solace. All the powers of earth and hell combined can never annul that salvation. Faith is proof against the most fiery, deadly and dangerous darts that can be hurled at us, and when tribulations, trials and persecutions assail, Jesus stands revealed to the eye of faith as our everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. While built upon such a groundwork, confiding in such a defense, blessed with such a consolation, and feeding upon such a substance, the saint may with rapture sing,

"There, there unshaken would I rest,
Till this vile body dies;
And then on faith's triumphant wings,
At once to glory rise."

2. The origin of faith. "It is the gift of God," emanates directly from him. So sable was the mantle that benighted all our faculties, so dense the darkness that enshrouded us, that it could truly be said of us that, "Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Not one ray of light by which we could see ourselves as we really are by nature, or God as he is in his holiness. No faculty to which a spiritual communication or revelation could be made, no capacity to speak one word or perform one act that could be acceptable to God, for "without faith it is impossible to please him." Seeing us thus involved in darkness and in death, the Lord mercifully bestows this precious favor upon us as a free gift. It is "the faith of the operation of God," and we therefore "believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Jesus when he raised him from the dead." Thus he gives a capacity through which we are enabled to receive instruction from him, and thus all his children are taught of him, and hence,

3. The use of faith. As a hand or receptacle we receive all that the Lord bestows upon us, whether it be in instruction, comfort, or ability to serve him.

We thus learn that we are sinners, lost, undone and helpless; a lesson that all the earthly schools, from the highest theological down to the minutest infant Sunday school, will forever fail to teach us. Thus we learn our ignorance; we know not what to do - our weakness, we cannot do what we would. We learn, too, that something must be done or we are lost forever. We now anxiously and earnestly strive to better our condition, but can do nothing more than to exhaust the supposed strength that we had. We are most miserable when we see our defilement, feel our pollution and are convinced that we are a mass of corruption; the whole head sick, the whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness. At the same time by this faith we see God in all his pristine purity, and thus is portrayed so wide a contrast that it seems to us impossible that two such extremes can ever meet in peace. Sad dismay, sore tribulation and dark despair all rest upon us and sink us into the lowest pit of horror, and place us in a condition to make comfort doubly welcome to us. In this direful extremity Jesus is revealed to the eye of faith, and when we see him, realize his power and grace to save, his mercy to relieve and his presence to console, joy and gladness takes the place of sorrow and mourning, and causes us to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. With what rapture we can now sing,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,

While the raging billows roll,
While the tempest still is nigh."

Faith now seems triumphant for the time being, but ere long we are made to witness with sad surprise,

4. The trial of faith. The faith of God's elect is destined to meet with many sore and fiery trials. The world, the flesh and the devil soon array themselves in hostile attitudes against it. While Jesus is in view, and faith with strong vision looks to him, all is well. The world is forgotten, the flesh out of sight, the devil banished. The loveliness of our dear Redeemer engrosses all our attention, charms all our new given faculties. But ere we are aware the world begins to fascinate, the flesh to appropriate, and the devil to accommodate the things of the world and the flesh to the depraved nature of the unsuspecting pilgrim. The eye becomes dim, the Savior appears to have withdrawn himself, and now comes the trial. Our faith seems to languish, and is so feeble that we even doubt its reality, fear that we have grasped but the shadow, missed the substance, and are deceived after all. In this deep despondency we inquire, Is he clean gone forever? "O that I knew where I might find him? I would come even to his seat." Thus the struggle proceeds, the war is waged between the flesh and the spirit, between faith and unbelief. But, languid as faith may appear, it still battles in the conflict, abides, and in the most fiery trial looks unto Jesus, directs to his word, points to his promises, relies upon his grace, which is always found sufficient and equal to the day. The apostle's cheering language is now appropriately adapted to the forlorn condition when he says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." And again, "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The trial of faith is at times protracted to such an extent that we realize a "heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of our faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." - 1 Peter i. 6, 7. Through all this fiery ordeal, faith, though often weak, can never fail; it still "abideth."

5. The triumph of faith. Although the enemies of the faith of God's elect are numerous and formidable, they may fearlessly fling their banner to the breeze and bid defiance to the assaults of every foe. Were there nothing else to cheer them in the battle storm, the ever heard and always heeded petition of the majestic Author of our faith proves an all sufficient guarantee in every trial. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me" &c. - John xvii. 9. And as an invulnerable shield, it turns to flight the armies of the aliens, and quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked. Often in passing through these trying ordeals it appears to be "little," weak, and ready to faint, but

however feeble, it still "abideth," for its divine Author never fails to give fresh warrants and send additional testimonials in every time of need, and these seasonable supplies encourage its recipients to "wax valiant in fight," and deal such deadly blows as to stagger and discomfit their invading assailants. Notwithstanding these oft repeated assaults, those fightings without and fears within, the child of faith should never yield to fear, faith must finally triumph; for, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." We therefore cheerfully sing,

"I've fought through many battles sore,
And I must fight through many more;
I take my breastplate, sword and shield,
And boldly march into the field,"

resting assured that the scene will end in a final and complete triumph at last.

HOPE. Hope is a contemporary with faith. They are coequal concomitants, accompany each other as mutual help-meets through all the toilsome pilgrimage of the christian's mortality. While faith scans at a distance a glorious immortality, hope anticipates a safe mooring in the haven of eternal rest. While faith beholds in Jesus an incorruptible, undefiled and unfading inheritance, hope patiently waits and longs for the attainment of the full possession of the saints in light. While faith exhibits Jesus as having already entered within the veil as the forerunner, hope fastens upon him as an all sufficient anchorage, and the vessel of mercy may bid defiance to the raging tempests and surging billows that play around and dash upon her. Hope, too, like faith, has its alternate depressions and revivals, its dimness and lucidity, its disappointments and prospective attainments; and, in fact, faith and hope are so completely co-equal that they seem to ebb and flow, wax and wane in unison. When faith is strong, hope is jubilant; when faith is weak, hope lingers. Hope, like faith, is based upon and rests in the unfailing promises of God, and therefore must abide, though its object may appear far in the distance and slow in coming, and thus, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh it is a tree of life."- Prov. xiii. 12.

"By glimmering hopes and gloomy fears,
We trace the sacred road,
Through dismal deeps and dangerous snares,
We make our way to God."

However despondent hope may be, or however distant the object desired, though it tarry, we may patiently and confidentially wait, for faith will surely come to the rescue in the proper and acceptable time, portrays to forlorn hope the all glorious and animating

Author and Object of hope, then, "We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But how often we realize that these animating seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord are but transient visitations, few and far between, and anon we find ourselves submerged in the cesspool of despondency, bemoaning our hopelessness.

"Is this, dear Lord, the thorny road,
That leads us to the mount of God?
Are these the toils thy people know,
While in the wilderness below?

'Tis even so; thy faithful love,
Doth all thy people's graces prove;
'Tis thus our pride and self must fall,
That Jesus may be all in all."

Faith and hope proceed from the same source, travel together harmoniously, are alike abiding principles, perform their respective missions with implicit obedience and strict adherence and fidelity to the mandates of the King of saints.

Dear brethren, how thankful we should be to the kind Giver of all good for these God-given principles, and for the faithful manner in which they execute the important functions for which they were given, for both are the immediate gifts of God. See Eph. ii. 8, and 2 Thes. ii. 16. Think, too, how completely they are adapted to our perilous condition while we are strangers and pilgrims, beset with foes and fightings and fears on every hand.

CHARITY. This is but another name for the love of God, and probably may be considered the exercise of the love of God. "God is love," and therefore love is the great fountain head and reservoir whence all the fullness of spiritual blessings emanate, while faith and hope may be considered the channels or ducts through which they are conveyed to the children of God. They are all three intrinsically good and great things, but charity is the greatest of the three. Of all the emotions that enter the heart of man, love is the most pleasant. Could our natural affections towards each other commendably and universally predominate, and be properly reciprocated, what a palladium it would be against the feuds, animosities and bickerings that now pervade society. In the family circle peace and harmony would dwell and bless the entire household; in the neighborhood kindness, friendship and justice would prevail; in the nation it would prove a complete quietus to the noise of war, the clash of arms, the tumults, the discord, the quarrel; and instead of those hell born imps, we should have peace, repose, concord and universal philanthropy in families, neighborhoods, nations and kingdoms. If the natural love of man to man could work such wonders everywhere, what would the immutable love of God do were it universal? But this is out of the question. We will ask, what wonders has it wrought in the

kingdom of God? In contemplating the love of God and its wonderful effects upon the recipients of it, we have a sublime and admirable subject before us.

The wonders of redeeming love, and the working of the Holy Spirit proceeding from it, the abounding grace, the solacing nature and tenderness of his relieving mercy, as taught in the scriptures and witnessed in the experience of the Lord's children, all emanate from the love of God. What a sovereign balm it is for the broken heart; what soothing cordial for the contrite spirit.

"It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast,
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest."

It matters not how forlorn may be our condition, how deep our contrition, how intolerable our anguish, how pungent our pain of body and mind, the love of God given and felt in a sufficient degree is a panacea for every pain, a catholicon for every malady. The beloved children of God, in recounting their past experience, will remember with gratitude, the wonders of God's love displayed in condescending to make known to them their exceeding sinfulness and calamitous condition, and then the wondrous exhibition of love in revealing the Savior, and thus their grief is banished, their distress relieved, and the billows of trouble, however boisterous they may have been before, are all calm when the cheering voice of the Savior is heard assuring them that their many sins are all forgiven, washed away by his atoning blood.

And we should rejoice that this love is changeless as its author and "an everlasting love." Through all the toilsome, weary and tempestuous journey of life it gives rest to the weary, they rest in his love; a covert from the tempest and rivers of living water for the thirsty; and amid the waves of trouble,

"Its powers the raging winds control,
And rule the boisterous deep;
It makes the sleeping billows roll,
The rolling billows sleep."

The more we see, the more we feel, and the more we meditate upon the wondrous love of God, the more the breadth and length and depth and height seems to stretch and soar above and beyond the scan of our limited vision. Far, far beyond the bounds of time its miraculous work was going on, and there embosomed the whole elect of God, recorded their names in the archives of heaven and secured their eternal salvation by grace. Go back to the verge of time, and it was incontestably evinced, notwithstanding our deep rebellion there. All through the lapse of past ages its benignant work has been displayed

in thousands upon thousands of instances; and in our day, with what thrilling emotions our bosoms swell when it is shed abroad in our hearts, when we receive but an earnest of its divine fullness and realize its soothing power.

"Love is the sweetest bud that blows,
Its beauty never dies;
On earth among the saints it grows,
And ripens in the skies."

Dear brethren, has the Lord condescended to bestow this precious boon upon us? Then let us behold with wonder and admiration what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us; and may it have its beneficent influence upon us all. We are all contaminated with sins, transgressions and faults of various kinds, but love throws a charitable mantle over multitudes of them, and begets in us that long-suffering and forbearance that is so essential for our peace and welfare while in the flesh. Then let us not hinder the work of love, let it be without dissimulation. How different the love of God from our natural passion bearing the name! Our human affections are placed upon such as are comely, amiable, virtuous, kind, &c., and then it is often intensified or may vanish with the fluctuations of our vacillating natures. But what redeeming quality could the Lord see in us? Us, who stood in direct antagonism to all his excellence, native goodness, exalted purity and holy perfections. Yet, in view of all this persistent repugnance and unhallowed opposition, we repeat, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

"What was there in us that could merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so, Father, we must ever sing,
Because it seemed good in thy sight."

It is as uncontrollable by human agency as the raging tempest, as irresistible as the decree of Jehovah. But O, what miraculous wonders it works within us! That bosom where formerly dwelt hatred, variance, strife, every evil work, the sight of which caused deep distress and dark despair, now swells with emotions of untold joy and peace, throbs with ecstasy and delight.

A new era is ushered in with the happy recipient now, and swelling notes of solemn praise gush spontaneously from a heart smitten and filled with the love of God.

In conclusion, we have under consideration three abiding, concurring and momentous principles; faith, hope and charity, each indispensable to the christian character. By faith we *see* the Son of God, in whom all fullness dwells; by faith we *hear* his voice, *taste* that he is gracious, *eat* his flesh, *drink* his blood; we *walk* by faith, we *live* by faith, it shields

us from all the fiery darts of the enemy. What wonders it wrought with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Aaron, Moses and Joshua, David, Solomon, Job and all the prophets, apostles and all the saints.

Through faith they have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. But we can only hint of its greatness here. May we all contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and learn more and more how to appreciate so valuable a commodity. Hope anticipates all that faith scans in the distant future, and patiently awaits the consummation of all its beatific benefaction, although unseen by mortal vision. "For what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." But great as are faith and hope, they are but appendages to charity or love. They execute their missions faithfully here, while needed, amid foes and fears, disappointments, trials, temptations and tribulations of every description, safely conduct us through them all; then lost in fruition, swallowed up in perfect vision, they cease; then, inducted into the peaceful presence of God, in the actual and full possession of the inheritance of the saints in light, we feast bountifully and eternally on all that faith looked for in the dim distance and hope awaited for in the dark future.

Brethren, farewell. May "the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Yours in love,

J.F. JOHNSON.

Genesis 22:14. "Jehovah-Jireh."

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Dec. 1874.

BROTHER BEEBE: - I have for some time past been poring over my barrenness, weakness and improvident nature, and my incapacity to provide for or guard against any future emergency. With these meditations, my mind, from some cause, has been led to think upon the expression, "Jehovah-jireh," as found in Gen. xxii. 14. It appears to me

that a more comprehensive, consoling and encouraging expression could not be embodied in fewer words.

This name *Jehovah*, or *Jah*, is said by biblical scholars to signify self-existence, or giving existence to all others. When we have a due sense of the majesty, magnitude and holiness of that fearful name, an awful solemnity seems to pervade us, and we almost shudder to speak that august, grand and matchless name, and,

"A solemn reverence checks our songs,
And praise sits silent on our tongues."

But when we reflect upon Jehovah-jireh, (in the margin, "The Lord will see, or provide,") and then consider the dimness of our vision to foresee, and inadequacy of our nature to provide for our present or future spiritual supplies, and then reflect upon the unlimited vision, the incomprehensible fullness of Jehovah, the immense, immeasurable plenitude that is treasured up in him, and then remember the faithfulness, firmness and infallible veracity and stability of his every promise; when we remember his eternal prescience that pervades time and eternity, the wonderful provision he has made, and then hear the "holy man of God who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost," after having the most incontestable evidence of the fact, pronounce the cheering and consoling expression, "THE LORD WILL SEE, OR PROVIDE;" and when we can indulge the humble hope that we have an abiding interest in the presence and provident care of Jehovah, both in things pertaining to the life that now is, and also of that which is to come, with what wondrous reverence and rapture should,

"Our tongues break out in unknown strains,
And sing surprising grace."

This expression, "Jehovah-jireh," was made under peculiar circumstances, and after the patriarch Abraham had passed through one of the most trying scenes. God had promised him, saying, "Sarah shall have a son." Sarah laughed at the idea, and in process of time, I suppose, like our modern means workers, concluded that the bare promise of God was not sufficient to rely upon, and therefore resorted to the use of means to enable the Lord to fulfill his promise. The result was that a mocker was produced, an illegitimate bastard.

How exactly the archetype is portrayed in our modern means-mongers. But the promise was, "Sarah shall have a son." And, not in Ishmael, but "In Isaac shall thy seed be called;" and when the stipulated time arrived, the promised seed was born. Behold here the father of the faithful, looking through a long and multitudinous line of posterity, with the buoyant promise of God that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," in one brief moment, according to all human appearance, must end in disaster.

But not so with God's procedure. The authoritative mandate of Jehovah was, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I shall tell thee of." What a scene! What a trial for a loving father to behold! "Thine only son, whom thou lovest." In passing through the trying ordeals that meet us here, we should "remember Abraham, our father," and imitate his example. We hear not a murmur - behold no delay. Early in the morning he cleaves the wood and sets out for the designated mount, and on the third day it is in view. There is laid upon the unsuspecting youth the wood, the fire and knife in the hands of the father. The fatal spot arrived at, the altar and wood are prepared, and now comes the critical time. The loving parent seems to know no pity. What are we to think of all this? Has the paternal heart become callous and insensible to the tender emotions of that love that so recently glowed there? O no. Faithfulness to his God urges him onward to perform the arduous task, and the deadly weapon is grasped, raised, and the terrible blow aimed. Obedient silence seems to have sealed the lips of both father and son. Startling, tragical phenomenon! But ere the fatal stroke is inflicted, the voice of mercy calls from heaven, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him." Abraham looked, and behold, behind him a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of Isaac.

I conclude that here is one of the most beautiful figurative illustrations of the deliverance of God's people by the offering up of his Son in their stead that we can possibly conceive of. I may not have a correct view of the figure, and may differ from some or all of my brethren as to its import.

Some think that Isaac here was typical of the offering and sacrifice of Christ for the sins of his people, but I think differently, for Isaac was not sacrificed, but another was provided and made a victim in his stead; and will not the experience of all God's children corroborate this view of the subject? Isaac was a child of promise as are all the children of God. Says Paul, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Again, "And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." - Gal. iv. 28, and iii. 29.

See Isaac wending his way to the place of offering under the weight of the very materials that seemingly was to consume him; and then remember, my Father's children, your own toilsome journey, oppressed with a load of sins, the very materials you supposed would destroy you. And when arrived at the fatal spot, like him our lips were sealed, we dared not murmur. The justice of God seemed to call for our immediate immolation; and although we may have seen the time, like other Arminians, when we could blasphemously accuse the Lord with injustice if he would not save us after doing all we could, but then our murmurings were hushed in silence. At this critical moment, and when the uplifted knife or sword of justice is ready to strike the fatal blow, all at once kind heaven intervenes, the dreadful stroke is stayed, and lo! yonder is Jesus, answering

to the ram caught in the thicket by his horns. Yes, behold him involved in the very mazes of sin for which we expected to be sacrificed; for he was made sin for us and we escape; while the justice of the sin-avenging law wreaks all its stores of vengeance upon the devoted victim.

Whether the foregoing view of the figure is correct or not, one thing is certain, which is "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," and it is also certain that his children were thereby "made free from sin," "that sin shall not have dominion over them; for they are no more under the law, but under grace."

What a wonderful provision the Lord has made for his sin defiled and contumacious children, and what an indubitable evidence that having done all this, he will continue his provident care until he effectually accomplishes all his will concerning 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." Not only did he give his own dear Son to ransom us from the grave, redeem us from death, but when we hear pronounced in the holy oracles, Jehovah-jireh, it should assure us that no needed blessings will be withheld from us, for when he gave his Son, in him he gave us all spiritual blessings, and that dear Son deals them out to us whenever it is necessary that we should have them. Sin has polluted and consigned us to death and darkness; but in him is provided an antidote for sin, his blood cleanses us from all sin; there too is provided life to animate and light to illuminate our pathway through all our journey in the waste howling wilderness, and even through the valley of the shadow of death. But that life needs sustenance. Well, in him is provided the bread and water of life. Bread of which a man may eat and not die, and water springing up into everlasting life.

In our infirmity we are ignorant, unrighteous, wayward and lost; but in him is ample provision of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. We daily feel our weakness, but the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song, therefore, "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

Whatever calamities, hostilities or menacing dangers may betide us here, such is the vision and provision of Jehovah-jireh that we may rest assured that the Lord will see and provide in every exigency. He has provided an armory from which we may be supplied with all the necessary weapons of our warfare, both offensive and defensive, and therefore should cohorts of belligerents assail us, we may fearlessly gird on our armor, and "in the name of our God set up our banners." - Psa., xx. 5; then let that banner "be displayed because of the truth," (Psa. lx. 4,) and thus equipped from heaven's magazine we may fearlessly follow the Captain of our salvation with an assurance that our warfare will end in triumph.

Let us take courage from the fact that our LEADER has opened the campaign with a decisive victory, fought on Calvary in single combat, where he met the whole host of our enemies, the combined powers of earth and hell in battle array assault him. Behold him in

that dreadful conflict, a gory victim bleeding from every wound, until bowing his thorn-crowned head that death might deal its deadliest blow, he yielded up the ghost.

"O, wondrous love, to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners such as I,
Might plead his gracious name."

Who could have dreamed of victory by him now? But strange to tell, by death he reached the strongest citadel of death, and "triumphed gloriously," for on that eventful third morning he rose, having "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

In this stupendous transaction, the anti-type of the ram caught in the thicket by the horns has provided for all his chosen ones a ransom from the power of the grave, redemption from death. Death, before which the most potent kings had quailed, the most powerful kingdoms had crumbled, and strong nations had withered at his pallid touch.

The triumph was complete, but not for himself exclusively, but for all his redeemed. What a matchless provision was exhibited in this marvelous transaction. Not only did he die to conquer death and subdue all things unto himself, but rose from the dead, rose to portray in liveliest colors the complete justification of all his dear children; they thereby being "freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." His blood cleanses them from all sin, his righteousness covers them with a spotless robe; they are therefore "free from sin, become servants to God, they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." But more still. Jehovah-jireh has seen and provided for them a city of refuge, "a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down." A residence of lovely, loving, lasting friends; and then dwells among them.

"Happy the church, thou sacred place,
The seat of thy Creator's grace;
Thine holy courts are his abode,
Thou earthly palace of our God."

How cheering and consoling to meet and mingle with the dear saints in this delightful habitation. No earthly scene so beautiful as a company of those lovely companions, all observing the order of the house of God; united in the strong bond of love, bound in the sweet cords of fellowship, hymning the high praises of their God. Brethren, do we fully appreciate this heaven provided privilege? How many of the precious jewels of our Master are isolated from their kindred, deprived of this precious privilege? But God has seen and provided for them too. Doubtless he has provided servants not only to feed the flock when gathered together in their organized capacity, but evangelists to itinerate as

fishers to fish for them and hunt for them, (see Jer. xv. 16,) and administer to them the bread of life. We believe too, that he has provided editors to publish our mediums of correspondence, and many of the disconsolate and tried ones are reached and comforted by our family papers; and this is one cause of my using my pen, (deficient as I know I am,) hoping that they may thus receive a word of consolation, isolated as they are, and deprived of the privilege of meeting and worshiping in company with their kindred in their Father's house.

What a wonderful provision he has made in giving us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." In short, he has provided a will and testament, and in that will he has secured to us all that we have enumerated in the foregoing remarks, and infinitely more than finite minds can reach or mortal tongues express; for it entails upon the heirs "an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away."

Compared with this rich legacy the best bequest that the world can bestow and all that it possesses dwindles into insignificance. That blessed will provides for us in every emergency,

"A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears."

No affliction however deep for which it does not provide a seasonable remedy, no temptation so trying but it provides a way of escape, no trial so sore but it affords strength to bear or a kind hand to remove it. Ample provision is made to soothe the sorrowful mind and revive the contrite spirit, to liberate the captive, bind up the broken heart, comfort the mourner, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, strength to the weak, health to the sick, wealth to the poor, rest to the weary, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, righteousness to the unrighteous, forgiveness of sins, and even life to the dead.

"My trials and sorrows, my conflicts and cares,
The spirit of prayer and the answer to prayers,
The steps that I tread and the station I fill,
My Father determined and wrote in his will."

Dear brethren, let us confide and implicitly trust in what Jehovah-jireh has provided for our comfort here, and our final deliverance from all that can annoy us hereafter; and let us all say with David, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

Abiding still your brother in trial and hope,

J. F. JOHNSON.

P. S. - Brother Beebe, accept my apology for this attempt to impose so soon again upon your columns, but remember it is entirely at your disposal.

J. F. J.

I Corinthians 14:40.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Dec. 30, 1874.

"Let all things be done decently and in order." I Cor. xiv. 40.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - The above text has recently been considerably impressed upon my mind, and after using it as a text a short time ago I was requested to give my views on it through the SIGNS.

The four churches in this vicinity that I have been serving for the last twelve or fourteen years have enjoyed an uninterrupted flow of peace, with one exception, a case which recently occurred.

No wonder that a term of such protracted quietude should throw the saints off their guard and lull them into an inexcusable state of supineness, and failing to look to the scriptures with that attention that is necessary to perpetuate the decency and order of the church, observing and *practicing* the rules therein contained, and which are so suitably adapted to the peace and order of "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

In compliance with the requests made, I attempt again (and perhaps too soon) to intrude upon your columns; (for it seems to me to be an intrusion) but if the remarks that I may make shall contribute a mite to the peace and order of Zion, I shall be amply remunerated. My object in this communication is to present to the readers of the SIGNS the laws and rules given by the King of Zion, which are so admirably suited to this important and very desirable object.

It was said by the Savior, "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." This terrible woe should solemnly impress our minds, so as to guard us against offending "one of these little ones." We certainly can desire no better rules to regulate the order and decency of the church than are laid down by her King. To do things decently is to attend

to them in a becoming, suitable, proper, and, in church matters, grave manner. It is very commendable in the saints to esteem others better than themselves. When this is the case, there is one prominent feature of decency and order. When one says to another, I am a better man than you, it is calculated to gender strife, and a quarrel often ensues; but if he says, You are a better man than I, there is but little danger of a difficulty.

When under the tuition of the Spirit, it is perfectly congenial with christian experience to esteem others better than ourselves; but it is the very reverse with the works of the flesh; hence the necessity of crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, in order to the decency and order of the church. It is important, too, that her members be of the same mind and the same judgment; and hence the urgent necessity of reading and studying the scriptures, and then regulating our doctrinal sentiments and practical deportment by the perfect rules therein contained and palpably set forth.

But above all, to perpetuate the decency and order of the church love must abound there, and while that is the ruling passion all will go on smoothly. It is then that,

"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows,
The sympathizing tear."

How we should strive to cultivate that heaven-born principle! We are not disposed to injure or offend those we love, but on the other hand to throw a mantle of charity over their misgivings, to bear their burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Charity covers a multitude of sins.

"When free from envy, scorn and pride,
Our wishes all above,
Each can a brother's failings hide,
And show a brother's love."

This much may suffice by way of inducement to *prevent* indecorum and disorder in the church; but my principal object in this communication is to elicit the best way of healing or removing the disease where it exists. We certainly do not need better laws and rules by which to manage matters of this character than the King has so bountifully provided. Here is one that is all-important: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Now, this emphatic, plain and positive language

uttered from the undefiled lips of the King that reigns in righteousness is particularly binding on all his disciples, and is insusceptible of a misconstruction. This rule, strictly attended to in its true spirit, would very seldom fail to heal wounds among the saints; but a neglect and violation of it, is one of the most fruitful sources of disorder. I wish to impress it upon the minds of the saints particularly, and exhort them to regulate their course in cases of offense in strict accordance with this most wholesome law. But alas! How often is it wholly unheeded!

A concludes that B has trespassed against him. If so, the way marked out for A to pursue is clear as a sunbeam; but instead of going to B, as directed, he goes to C, and C's prejudices are enlisted in his favor. But the matter does not rest here. A, and C his friend, must explain it to others, and their prejudices are secured, and soon the world, the flesh and the devil get it. It is food for them all. Now, the devil has always on hand plenty of blacking-boxes, brushes, tinderboxes and "Lucifer matches," with plenty of other combustible matter, and each of his emissaries are presently supplied with boxes, brushes, tinder, matches, &c., and each one listens attentively to A's complaint, especially if he should be an enemy to B, (and such are too apt to be gone to) he gives it a brush or two, blacks it a little, and away he goes with it to another; perhaps he gives it another smut, and so it goes the round until it is black as midnight.

Meanwhile B and his friends get it, and are astonished to see how black it is. Criminations and recriminations ensue, until all is one direful, doleful scene of confusion. Now we, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell." - James iii. 5; 6, and onward. The matter may have been small at the start, but now it is a great matter.

But now let us attend strictly to the RULE by which such matters should be regulated. A friend may advise A to go to B; but often he is ready to say, No, he has done the wrong, let him come to me. But that is not the rule. B may not have designed a wrong, and therefore may be unconscious of having done it; but if A is hurt he knows it, and he is the one to go. Let us then look at the law, for there certainly is a remedy for the evils alluded to. And here permit me to exhort every brother and sister to enforce that law whenever and wherever circumstances require it. But how shall I enforce it, says one? Why, if a brother or sister comes to you with a complaint against another, say to that brother or sister, Have you labored with that member as Christ has directed you? No. Then don't tell me anything about it, but go to the offender, as the Lord has told you. If that member neglects to go, and continues to complain, it is your duty to arraign him or her before the church; and I think all will agree that it then becomes the duty of the church to deal with that member for disobeying a plain and positive command of the Lord, and trampling upon his wholesome, salutary and standing rule.

Let us see the rationality, the justice of this rule. The laws of our country are aimed to be founded on justice, and they mostly are so based. Then, suppose a case is brought

before a court of judicature that requires a trial by jury. When that jury is being impaneled, one is presented before the court, and asked, Have you formed or expressed an opinion in this case? Yes. Then it is almost universally the case that the court or counsel tells that man to stand aside. That prepossessed opinion is calculated to bias his judgment, and he is therefore incompetent to try the case.

Now see a church where one-half or two-thirds or more of the members who, from the representations of one or the other of the contending parties, have formed and repeatedly expressed their opinions. Is that church in a suitable condition to decide upon the case? By no means. And thus it is that churches may disqualify and even unchurch themselves by a heedless disregard of the laws of their King. But let us see the case when the rule is observed. If my brother trespass against me, I am to go to him, For what purpose? Simply because I want him taken before the church and dealt with? O no! What then? To *gain my brother*. That should be my object, as plainly indicated in the text. Not to take him by the throat and say, "Pay me that thou owest," but to gain him.

I may go through all the external formula of the rule, and yet be a transgressor myself. Where this rule is neglected, or even outwardly applied, but in an improper or vindictive spirit, mole hills may swell into mountains; but let me go to him in a truly christian spirit and be governed by the rule, then mountains may be shrunk into mole hills, and the quietude of Zion is secured.

When the enemy of all righteousness has so successfully managed matters as to rend asunder for a time the dear ties that should bind the saints together in one bundle of love, and so long as he can keep up the division, he is in his native element - it is his glory. But is it not a fearful thing for a child of God to look back at? To see brothers and sisters cut off from all church privileges, and then say, My tongue, that little, unruly member, has been engaged in bringing about this state of things? God help a child of the Lord out of so doleful a condition, is my earnest prayer, for his name's sake. Then again, how the Lord's children, who have tasted that he is gracious, felt the consolations of the gospel, gone to the house of God in company with their brethren, united in hymning the songs of Zion, enjoyed the friendship, fellowship, union and communion of the saints, can enjoy themselves when deprived of all this, I do not know. God grant that I never may know. "This world is a wilderness of woe" at best, but how dense and dark it must be to a subject of grace when severed from the union, communion and fellowship of the saints, to roam solitary outside of its Father's house.

Brother Beebe, you and I, with a few others, are old enough to have seen small matters so magnified by the use of the tongue as to throw whole churches into confusion. Past and bitter experience admonishes us to warn our younger brethren to beware of such a course. In former times of trial we could point to a veteran of the cross and say, There is an able disciplinarian. But where are they now? Alas! "like angels' visits, few and far between." May we all solemnly consider this matter, and speak and act, particularly in cases of difficulty among saints, with caution, prudence and forbearance. How often it

has been our sad lot to say, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt." The Savior has said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Let me remind each individual member of the church, for none should be exempted, that in cases of offenses a few words fitly spoken, and at a proper time, may contribute much to the peace of the church. But we are too apt to listen to the complaint of a brother, especially when approached by a confidential one. We ought not to do it, but kindly admonish him to go to the offender and treat the case as the Savior has directed. Restrict the difficulty in the narrowest, closest limits that it is possible to do. These things grow and expand by publicity. Keep them, if possible, from the members of the church (strangers out of the question) until they are brought there in the right way, and then that church is in a state to judge of the matter, unbiased by previously formed or expressed opinions, none but the "two or three witnesses" having known of the case.

In conclusion, dear brethren, do we desire and pray for the peace and prosperity of Zion? Then let us observe faithfully the salutary rules and mandates of her King. If we cannot have peace in the home circle, in vain shall we seek it abroad. Remember that Zion is the sweet home of the family of God,

"There our best friends, our kindred dwell,
There God our Savior reigns."

Let us own his dominion and bow to his laws. We can hope for peace and prosperity in no other way. Do we desire our own peace and prosperity? Then hear David, who says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."

Our homes here are transient, fitful and evanescent; yet we should use every laudable exertion to secure their quietude. The church is the prelude to our eternal home; indeed, it is our eternal home; but while in this militant state she is subject to wars and commotions, strife and contentions, which like mildews blight her enjoyment. But her King has not left her without defenses to stay, beat back, or at least to palliate those grievances. May each one of us adhere strictly to and apply the remedies in a commendable spirit on every necessary occasion, and thus exhibit a family of peacemakers, and therefore "a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down."

Your brother and fellow-laborer for the good of Zion,

J. F. JOHNSON.

The Spirit, Soul & Body, &c.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., March, 1875.

MY DEAR BROTHER WILLIAMS: - Yours of the 30th of January was received, after considerable delay on the way, and I use the first opportunity in reply. I sensibly feel my insufficiency in attempting a compliance with the request you have made, but do not feel at liberty to withhold such light as the Lord may afford me when called upon by my brethren who are "inquirers after truth."

The first instruction you ask relates to the Patrons of Husbandry, or Grangers. Now, my dear brother, you will excuse me for saying but little on this subject, because I know but little, and may say nothing about it; and I think prudence would dictate that I should say but little upon a subject that I am ignorant of, for to me it looks like "beating the air." I can say, so far as I am concerned, I have no use for the order; for I am not a farmer at present, and if I was I should want to know more about the Grangers than I do before I could unite with them. That manufacturers and speculators by forming "rings" and combinations have imposed upon the farming community, was palpably proved to me when I was a farmer; for they generally held the prices of their own articles, and also those of the farmer's products, in their own possession; and if the farmers' only object is to fortify themselves against those impositions, it may be well enough; but until Primitive Baptists know more about the order than does their humble servant, my advice to them is, "Stand from under," especially if it is calculated to wound the feelings of the brethren, which we should hold sacred under all circumstances.

The other subject upon which you ask instruction I consider of far greater importance, and worthy of our most solemn attention, and so far as I am concerned could plead ignorance; but is that a sufficient plea while we profess and hope that the Lord is our wisdom? There lies my only hope of writing to profit you or others. The text you ask my views on is found in I Thess. v. 23, particularly the middle clause: "spirit, and soul, and body." I have not heretofore thought particularly on the subject, and know not that I have any special light on it. My own views are all that I can promise, and leave the matter to be tried by the scriptures. The apostle speaks very commendably of the brethren at Thessalonica, both of their faith and practice; gives faithful warning, wholesome instruction, interspersed with very appropriate exhortations. In some of the verses immediately preceding the text under consideration is a most excellent exhortation which we would do well particularly to observe. In the 21st and 22nd verses he exhorts them to, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," and to "abstain from every appearance of evil." Then follows the 23rd verse, in the form of an intercession: "And the very God of

peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The petition of the apostle here is that the God of peace may sanctify, set them apart wholly, entirely to his service, in holding fast that which is good, abstaining from evil, and thereby keeping the unity of the Spirit in peace, securing the things presented not only in the foregoing surpassing exhortation, but throughout the entire epistle.

"Spirit, soul and body." These are the particular words you wish me to write on. I suppose the spirit here alluded to is "the spirit of man that is in him;" not the Spirit of God which we receive of him in the new birth. See Prov. xiii. 12, xiv. 29, xvi. 18, 1 Cor. ii. 11, & 2 Cor. viii. 1. This spirit is sinful, wicked, prone to evil, and like all the rest of our natural faculties disposed to lead us astray from God, and after the perishing things of this vain world, such as worldly religion, with the whole catalogue of the works of the flesh resulting therefrom. By it the throat exhibits the similitude of an open sepulchre; it prompts the tongue to use deceit, plants the poison of asps under the lips, fills the mouth with cursing and bitterness, incites the feet to shed blood, impels the possessor onward in the ways of destruction and misery, and blinds the eyes to the way of peace and the fear of God.

The "Rev." author of "The Bible Dictionary" defines the spirit in man to be "his immortal soul;" and right in connection with this let us take into consideration the word *soul*.

In treating upon this word I shall probably have to collide with the whole arminian fraternity, and may be with some of the saints. In the first place we must dispense with the idea of the Bible Dictionary gentleman, or with the apostle's, for Paul in speaking of the King of kings and Lord of lords, says, "Who only hath immortality," &c. Now, if Christ only hath immortality, we have nothing immortal about us until we have him. That man has and must have an interminable existence, is evident; but the endless existence of the wicked is spoken of as death, the opposite or counterplot of life; for immortality, according to Paul's definition, is eternal life. See Rom. ii. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 16.

Again, Mr. Wesley, in his poetical strain, says:

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never dying soul to save,
And fit it for the skies."

Place this expression in juxtaposition with Ezekiel xviii. 4, 20, which says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and also Psalm lxxviii., "He spared not their soul from death," and where is the agreement?

This word *soul*, as used in the scriptures, is not applicable to any one particular part or faculty of man distinct from the rest. It is used in its original meaning in a complicated

sense. Sometimes it implies the whole man with all his parts, passions and faculties, as in Gen. ii. 7, "Man became a living soul," and also I Cor. xv. 45, "The first man Adam was made a living soul." Sometimes the word refers simply to persons, as in Gen. xii. 5, Abraham and Lot took "the souls that they had gotten in Haran." Again, Exodus i. 5, "And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls." At other times it is spoken of as the life, as in Matt. xvi. 26 and Mark viii. 36, "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" or life; for it is evident that the life is alluded to here, as much as to say, What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his life? He must die and leave it all; he cannot buy it. The different affections, passions and appetites are attributable to the soul, as love, hatred, joy, sorrow, hunger, thirst, &c.

All this convinces me that the first time the word is used in the scriptures exhibits its most full and complete meaning, "*man* became a living soul."

"And body." We are a perfect mystery to ourselves in spirit, soul and body. How little we know about either! And when we attempt to combine and explain the whole, we at once enter an awfully obscure labyrinth. The body is a mazy, complicated piece of machinery, and only moves when actuated by a motive power. Here we meet mystery again. What is the power? Look at the busy throng of human bodies moving hither and thither. What is it that is producing all this motion and commotion? Some agency is moving these bodies, this complex mass of machinery. Is it the spirit - the soul - the mind? What is it? If we go to our lexicographers for an explanation of the meaning and properties of these words, they leave us all bewildered, and tell us that the spirit is "the soul of man," that the soul is "the mind," the mind "the soul," making them all one; and there they leave us all in a maze.

Well, suppose we conclude that it is the spirit or mind that propels this intricate piece of mechanism, for we certainly follow the leading of our mind to a greater or less extent. Here we meet mystery again. How does, mind or spirit that is immaterial act upon matter or materiality, and why does it act so differently upon different ones? One man's mind directs him to certain pursuits in business, and directly his feet and hands, in obedience to the motive power of the mind, are put in motion to accomplish the work. Another one's mind directs him to a different pursuit, and his muscular powers obey the impetus, and his members are set to work to reach the prospective goal. Again, one man's mind or spirit will prompt him to an honorable and upright course and conduct in this life, and the motions of his body obey the mandate. Another's will dictate the most dishonorable and wicked one, and his misguided limbs will move him to the diabolical acts. Such is the diversity of the prompting of the human spirit or carnal mind that we cannot find two acting in concert throughout. But in one thing we find a partial unanimity, and that is the way of salvation. Whether it is the Hindu or the Hottentot, the Buddhist or Mohammedan, the Roman Catholic or the Arminian Protestant, all agree that it must be by works of some kind. This is depraved nature's religion. But one step further and all is

complexity again, all Babylon or confusion, for they differ as widely as to the different kinds of work to be done as they do in other worldly matters.

This calls for some remarks on your third and last query. You say (and I think correctly) "that these three component parts constitute the man." I also think they constitute the natural man. Then you ask the question, "Is either of them, or all, quickened into divine life - born of the Spirit of God?" I answer unequivocally, that the scriptures do not show that all or any part of the natural or Adam man is born of the Spirit of God. You further say that a mere think so, in the absence of scripture, is worthless. So say I. Now, we are all born with this natural spirit, soul and body; and the Savior says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." So then, in this birth we are all flesh, including the "fleshly mind," "fleshly lusts," &c. Paul said, after he was born again, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" but the whole man (new man) that is born of the Spirit is good; for "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."

It is everywhere demonstrated that the birth never changes the *nature* of the thing born. What a miracle it would be to see the birth of a young goat turn or change it to a sheep, and *vice versa*. And more, everything that is born partakes of the precise nature of its parentage; hence what is born of God is like him, cannot sin, and what is born of the flesh is like it, cannot do good. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." But, although the birth does not change the nature of the thing born, it does change its condition or circumstances. It receives its nutriment differently, its clothing or protection is different, and it is surrounded by different elements. Still, the flesh was flesh before the birth; it is neither more nor less afterward, the same by nature.

As has been shown, and cannot be denied, each offspring partakes of the nature of its parentage. It has further been shown by the scriptures that what is born of God is good, "cannot sin," and what is born of the flesh is bad, cannot do good. Then, if Paul's natural spirit, soul or body was born of God, how could he say, "I know that in me dwells no good thing?" If his natural spirit was born of God, would not that be good? And if his natural soul was born of God, would not that be good? And if his natural body was born of God, would not that be good? All these were born of the flesh, and if the Savior was correct in his definition, all that is born of the flesh is flesh. I think that instead of "virtually denying the resurrection of the bodies of the saints," this view of the subject is the only one upon which we can establish and confirm that doctrine; for if the old or Adam man is born of God, "worked over," as intimated in your letter, he "cannot sin," as the scriptures declare; and if he cannot sin, he cannot die, for death is but the effect of sin, and sin the only cause of death, and no effect can take place without a cause to produce it. The Savior says, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." This cannot be said of the old man, for he "shall die." I repeat, then, that if the old man is born of God he cannot die, and therefore there could be no resurrection of the dead bodies of the saints.

Christ died for his people because their sins were transferred to or laid on him. He died for them, and rose for them. In that death and resurrection he did ransom them from the power of the grave, redeem them from death, and thus was the "first born from the dead," "the first fruits of them that slept;" and I see no propriety in speaking of a first birth, or first fruits, if there be no succeeding birth or fruits to follow. So far as the spiritual family is concerned, in their first birth, the whole nation was born at once. See Isa. lxvi. 8. And when they are individually "born of God," when we "receive the Spirit which is of God," we are "born again." Then, when these natural bodies are first born they are "born of the flesh;" and when they are "born from the dead," they will be born again; and until we are born again, born from the dead, the natural man never can see the spiritual kingdom of God or enter into it. When that shall have been accomplished, the Lord's assertion, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," will be fully realized. But, in order to that birth, a radical change must take place, not produced by the birth, but in order to it; and this is the first time that the word change is used in relation to the "old man," or any part of him. Hence it is said, "who (Christ) shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," &c. - Phil. iii. 1. And again, "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." And yet again, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Then, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," &c.

Now, I object to the expressions, "changed by grace," and "changed from nature to grace," as used by many in reference to the new birth, and relative to any change in the nature of the natural man. Those expressions are nowhere used in the scriptures, nor is a change spoken of at all in that sense. But then and there we anticipate a most glorious and heart thrilling change into the image and likeness of our all glorious Savior, to dwell in his peaceful presence forever.

"Soar we then where Christ has led,
Following our exalted Head;
Made like him, like him to rise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies."

In conclusion, my dear brother, as Christ has put away the sins of his people by the sacrifice of himself, redeemed them from the curse of the law, we may rest assured that the supplication of the apostle will be finally and fully answered, and the whole spirit and soul and body of each one will be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have now endeavored, though in much weakness, to answer your request, which presents a fit subject upon which to exhibit "Christ and the resurrection," the joyful theme of the apostles and the lively hope of the saints.

Your friend and brother most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Visit To The Eastern Association &c., In 1875.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Aug. 30, 1875.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - In compliance with a promise made to many friends, I send you for publication in the SIGNS a brief account of our visit to the east and north.

My wife and self left Kentucky on the 26th day of May last, and on the 29th reached the Delaware Association, the first meeting we attended in the east. From there we visited the Delaware River, Warwick and Chemung Associations in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania; and without descending to particular persons and things, will say that it was a peculiar season of refreshing to us, for we surely could not ask a more cordial reception or more hospitable treatment than we everywhere received by our very kind brethren and friends who entertained us, and to whom we tender our sincere gratitude. From the Chemung Meeting we went immediately to Canada, and were joined there by brother Beebe, who continued with us ten or twelve days. Then in company with brother Beebe, and brother Durand, visited the Quarterly Three Days' Meeting at Ekfrid. That meeting is fondly cherished in my memory. Surely the Lord was with our dear brethren Beebe and Durand, in proclaiming "the unsearchable riches of Christ." I was made there to feel in a peculiar manner my own littleness and weakness. So signally was that insufficiency impressed upon my mind on that occasion that I must particularly refer to it here. So amply did the good Lord fill his servants with the fullness of God, that it came to me, and doubtless to others, like a refreshing shower from the presence of the Lord. I was made to blush at the thought of my own weakness, and think that if the Lord would enable me to exhibit the truth in such charming colors, I would willingly spend and be spent in the heart-cheering work. We continued in Canada for more than three weeks from the time that we reached there; and I can safely say that I never met with more devoted kindness and hospitality anywhere than with the brethren and friends in Canada. My wife and self tender our kindest regards to them, and hope to be remembered by

them. From the numerous meetings we attended in Canada we visited Niagara Falls, and left there on the evening of the 13th of July, reached Baltimore City on the evening of the 14th, was kindly entertained at Dr. Thorne's, [regretting that his lady was absent] and on the next day reached brother Broder's, in Alexandria. On Friday we visited the city of Washington, and on Friday night returned to Alexandria, and had meeting with the church there. On Saturday morning we set out for Broad Run Church, in Fauquier Co., Va.; had a pleasant meeting there, and lodged at night at our excellent brother Hunton's, with his very agreeable family, five of whom are members of the church, himself, wife and three daughters. There I was in the place of my infancy, my father and mother having been members of the Broad Run Church more than seventy years ago, myself not having seen the place in fifty years. In the "Old Dominion," we visited and passed through the counties of Fairfax, Fauquier, Prince William, Culpepper, (the county of my birth) Albemarle, Fluvand and Louisa, and perhaps two or three others, visiting in the time my wife's two sisters and brother, who were very kind and interesting.

Those "Old Virginians" have been trodden down by brute force and tyranny, yet all this has not destroyed the traces of nobility, friendship and liberality which are so characteristic of the people. On Monday, the 9th of August, we returned to Alexandria, had another pleasant meeting there, and on Tuesday morning set out for the Old School Corresponding Meeting of Virginia, which commenced on the following day with the Mill Creek Church, Berkely Co., W. Va. This was the last and very pleasant meeting we were blessed with the privilege of attending while on our long journey. There, as everywhere else, we met with dear brethren and kind friends. This meeting was attended by Elders Beebe, Furr, Rose, Chick, Francis, and our young and interesting brother Smoot. We tarried, and had a pleasant meeting with the church on Sunday, after the meeting, and on Monday morning left the comfortable residence of our kind friend, Mr. David Thompson, near Martinsburgh, and on Tuesday morning at 5 o'clock reached Cincinnati, and the same day Lexington at 12 p.m., and remained with our dear, venerable and deeply afflicted brother, T. P. Dudley, not having heard of the saddening loss of his dear companion until the shock met us in his lonely room. From sad experience I think I know how to sympathize with him, who has been and yet is a dear friend and brother to me. May the God of all comfort sustain and console him with his divine presence through the remaining part of his pilgrimage here. On Wednesday morning we left Lexington and reached home at 10 a.m., finding all well. Many pleasant reminiscences occupy my mind while reviewing our long journey. We were nearly three months from home, and traveled perhaps more than six thousand miles.

The first and not the least important consideration is the unity of "the faith of God's elect," that was so conspicuously portrayed in the body of testimony proclaimed by so many "able ministers of the New Testament," with one weak exception, that has already been seen in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and that when compared with the "doctrine of God our Savior," and so ably exhibited by his able servants, seems but as the small dust

of the balance. Aside from that little squib, it is delightful to contemplate upon "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," that was seen and felt at all the meetings that we had the pleasure of attending.

In conclusion, dear friends, while the whirling wheels of time are fast speeding us onward to our final happy destiny, may the God of peace prepare us to appreciate that precious boon of unity, that heart-cheering peace and consoling concord that so often cheered us while together.

Your brother in hope,

J. F. JOHNSON.

P.S.- I will here say that we had the pleasure of seeing our dear brother Pollard baptize four of our Father's children at Ekfrid, and I baptized two at Broad Run, Virginia, all of whom gave satisfactory evidence of their calling and election.

J. F. J.

John 11:25; "The Resurrection & The Life."

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Oct. 1, 1875.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - The request of Brother Caudle, of Texas, and yours accompanying it, seems to call on me for an effort to comply. My absence from home for near three months at one time, and a considerable portion of the time since my return from that long journey, may suffice for an apology for the delay. The request was that I should give my views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on the text found in John xi. 25: "I am the resurrection and the life." Although the words are but few and very plain, I almost tremble at the thought of writing on them, for their immense magnitude reaches far beyond my feeble powers to comprehend them. Much has been written and much spoken on this momentous subject of the resurrection, and some seem anxious to explain the whole mystery, while others seem as anxious to explain it away.

The expression of Martha and the reply of the Savior may assure us that the resurrection of Christ and of his people are in one respect identical, indivisible and inseparable, as is evident according to the following texts: "Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body shall they arise," &c. - Isa. xxvi. 19. I have under-scored some of the foregoing words, not by way of emphasis, but to show that they are supplied words. I do not know that they change the meaning. But again, "After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." - Hosea vi. 2. In their fallen nature they are his by redemption as well as by a gift from his Father. See

Psalm lxxiv. 2, Isa. xliiii. 1, John xvii. 6. Therefore they are his, and one, with him in the resurrection.

"One in the tomb, one when he rose,
One when he triumphed o'er his foes,
One when in heaven he took his seat,
And seraphs sung all hell's defeat."

The unity of Christ and his redeemed in the resurrection is fully exhibited in the 15th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, where the apostle clearly shows that unity. Read from the 12th to the 27th verse, inclusive. It was the momentous and heart-thrilling theme of the apostles, the joy inspiring solace of the saints in all ages. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." A body of death weighs continually upon us like a miserable incubus, to depress our every spirits, and sensibly feeling our native sinfulness and carnality of the flesh, we groan daily, being burdened.

"Temptations everywhere annoy,
And sins and snares our peace destroy;
Our earthly joys are from us torn,
And oft an absent God we mourn."

The animating hope of a glorious resurrection, when fully realized, affords the careworn pilgrim a soothing panacea for all the woes that flesh is heir to, a comfortable assurance of a final egress from a world of tribulation, and a happy ingress into one of endless felicity.

"This glorious hope revives,
Our courage by the way,
While each in expectation lives,
And longs to see the day."

Laboring and heavy laden we trudge along the dismal and rugged pathway of our tiresome pilgrimage, with now and then a flickering light to dawn upon the saddening gloom but for a moment and disappear; or if a brighter beam from the "Sun of Righteousness" illumines our dark journey, how soon a sable shade seems to obscure the light, and we feel like exclaiming with Jeremiah, "Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through."

While wading through and buffeting the billows of tribulation, how cheering to look by faith beyond the gloomy tomb and contemplate the brilliancy and blessedness of a luminous resurrection day. One by one we accompany the remains of the dear saints to

their earthen dreary resting place, and while covering and secluding them forever beyond the gaze of mortal vision, may sing in solemn notes the plaintive, pleasing requiem,

"O grave, though thy gloom their remains have enshrouded,
The triumph o'er thee is already complete;
They'll rise, and be borne to the regions unclouded,
To hail their Deliverer and sing thy defeat."

Should not this "good hope" of a blessed immortality bear up our oft sinking spirits while apparent,

"Dangers stand thick through all the ground,
To push us to the tomb;
While fierce diseases wait around,
To hurry mortals home?"

And while appalled with those dangers, troubled on every side, with fightings without and fears within, how consoling for the eye of faith to look away from the gloomy picture to the dear Redeemer, and hear his animating voice proclaim, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE." With what joy should we contemplate the approaching period when the dear Redeemer "shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation," when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God," when the dead in Christ shall rise, and when he "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

In writing on this wonderful and sublime subject I find myself submerged in mystery. Paul said, "Behold I show you a mystery," and a mystery it must remain until consummated. We would recoil at the idea of the resurrection of our vile body in its present state of vileness, for then it would still be a mass of putridity; but a radical *change* must take place, not in the new man, for he has no need of a change for the better, but in "this vile body;" and this is the first time that the word *change* is used in the scriptures relative to the "old man" or any part of him. This change is from corruption to incorruption, from dishonor to glory, from weakness to power, from a natural to a spiritual body. Now Christ has said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." In reference to the new man a nation was born at once. See Isa. xlv. 8. The old man was first born of the flesh, and this we call his first birth. Christ is the *first* born from the dead, "the *first* fruits of them that slept," and I see no propriety in speaking of a first born, or first fruits, if there is no succeeding birth or fruits to follow. I conclude that those who follow him in the regeneration will follow him all the way through.

Through tribulation in a degree, as he was troubled, through suffering as he suffered, to fill up the suffering of Christ in his body, or partake of his suffering, through temptation as he was tempted, through death as he died, and through the resurrection as he was raised. If his resurrection from the dead was a birth, ["born from the dead,"] will not the resurrection of his people from the dead be a birth also? If so, is not this the second or new birth of the old man? To me it seems inevitable.

Now, my dear brethren, I hope you will not begin to rail and say this is a "new idea," for it matters not whether it is new or old to us; the question with us should be, is it in accordance with the scriptures?

When this shall have been realized I think that the assertion of the Savior in John iii. 3 will be fully consummated, and not before; for I do not believe that the natural man, while carnal, (and Paul says, "I am carnal,") can see the kingdom of God, for it is a spiritual kingdom; "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." Therefore, as before observed, those who have followed Christ in the regeneration will follow him all the way through.

"The Spirit raised my Savior up,
When he had bled for you,
And, spite of death and hell shall raise,
The friends of Jesus too."

Then let us hopefully wait and patiently endure the tribulations, temptations, persecutions and other afflictions of the gospel, until,

"The trump of God shall rend the rocks,
And open adamantine locks;
Call forth the dead from death's dark dome,
And Jesus take his ransomed home."

"AND THE LIFE." This is the resurrection life that "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep," and the resuscitation of the immaculate head secures the resurrection of every member of his body infallibly. It is the same life that will animate and change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, and when this resurrection life is given the mysterious change will be complete; and thus being born again, born from the dead as Christ was born from the dead, we *can* see the kingdom of God in its spiritual and eternal vitality and effulgent glory. Brethren, this birth from the dead inspires all the hope I have that this corruptible will ever put on incorruption, that this mortal will put on immortality. This resurrection life differs widely from the natural life that animates our fallen and decaying nature, which is, but a vapor,

has been forfeited and is doomed to death. It is the element in which the new man lives, and baffles and defies the powers of death and the grave. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," said the Savior. We have this life in him, not in ourselves. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." The blessings of this life are all in him. It is spiritual life, and requires spiritual food, drink and raiment to subsist upon. Those and other spiritual blessings are given bountifully to sustain and perpetuate it. Sin and death have no dominion over it. It defies all their powers.

Christ, who is our life, is given us, and with him all this blessedness. Precious boon! "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." O priceless gift! The head over all things to the church is given us, eternally united to us, and from that vital head forever flows the stream of endless life that vitalizes, ramifies and permeates every member of his body. Paul says, "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Not only is bestowed upon us the living head in whom all fullness dwells, but faith also is given us, by which we feast upon and participate in all the rich fullness. Having this life, we shall outride all the tempests and overtop all the billows of time that can assail us, and enter at last and be safely moored in the blissful haven of eternal repose, of endless felicity.

"Yes, we to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven."

Now, my dear brother Caudle, I have tried to comply with your request, and have done the best I could, and hope that you and others who may read the foregoing remarks will weigh them in the proper balances, and if wanting, disclaim them. If I am wrong, the friend that will convince me of my error will receive a reward and my hearty thanks.

Respectfully submitted to and at the disposal of brother Beebe.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

J. F. JOHNSON.

II Peter 2:1; Letter To Elder F.A. Chick.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., NOV. 13, 1875.

MY DEAR BROTHER CHICK: - I have read in the last received number of the SIGNS a communication from you, on 2 Peter ii. 1, in response to the request of brother Staton, and having views somewhat different on the subject, have concluded to present them to you. I first thought of replying through the same medium, but thinking that by so doing I might subject myself to the charge of criticism, fault-finding or controversy, I would submit them to your judgment first, and if you think them worthy a place in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES you can forward what I say on the subject; but all is respectfully submitted to your discretion to publish or throw aside. But to the text.

"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 bring upon themselves swift destruction."

You seemed to be at a loss to know in what sense the Lord bought those false teachers, while I do not think that the text inculcates the idea that he bought them at all, in any sense; nor can I see that a fair and strict grammatical construction of the language will admit the idea that he bought them. It appears evident to me that the noun "*people*" in the text is the antecedent to the pronoun "*them*," and the "*false teachers*" the antecedent to the pronoun "*themselves*." By noting this view of the subject I think we will be able to arrive at a correct interpretation of the language. Let us read carefully and see. "But there were false prophets also among the PEOPLE, [the Jewish people among whom were the false prophets] even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought THEM [the Jewish people] and bring upon THEMSELVES [the false teachers] swift destruction."

Now, if this construction of the language is correct, it was not the false teachers, but the Jewish people that were bought; and it is palpably shown in the scriptures that they were bought with a redemption price. When the Lord was about to redeem the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage he directed Moses to say to them, "I will REDEEM you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgment." - Ex. vi. 6. Again, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is he not thy father that hath BOUGHT thee," &c. - Dent. xxxii. 6. But further, "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to REDEEM for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods." - 2 Sam. vii. 23. See also Ex. xv. 13, Deut. vi. 8, ix. 26, xiii. 5, Mic. iv. 10, which show

conclusively that the Lord did buy or redeem the PEOPLE of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, as well as from their captivity in Babylon. But where there is a redemption, there must be a redemption price paid. But the price paid when he bought or redeemed Israel from bondage or captivity, was very different from the price paid when he redeemed his people from the curse of the law. But what was the price paid for the Israelites to redeem them from bondage and captivity? Solomon says, "The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright." – Prov. xxi. 18. And accordingly the Lord says, "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." Also, "I gave men for thee, and people for thy life." - Isa. xliii. 3, 4. Then the price that the Lord paid for the redemption of his people from their sins, was the broken body and shed blood of Jesus; but the redemption paid for Israel from Egyptian bondage and Babylonian captivity was "men and people."

Now, my dear brother Chick, you have my views on the text under consideration, and if you think them worth anything to yourself, brother Staton, or any others of the household of faith, you can publish them; otherwise throw them aside, and I shall not complain. Do not think that I feel capable of instructing you at all, for I feel more like being instructed by you at all times. We should be much pleased to receive correspondence from you at any time.

Your brother most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

Judges 2:5 & I Samuel 7:12.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., Jan. 1876.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - With the remittances that I send for the SIGNS, I will offer a few words of comment on two words; the first found in the book of Judges, ii. 5, which is *Bochim*; and the other in 1 Sam. vii. 12, which is *Ebenezer*. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for his people, and the words named constitute a part of the whole, and if we can apply them appropriately they may among many others profit at least some of his people. Those words were significant, as were, most of the names of both persons and places in those ancient times. In the first chapter of the book of Judges, after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, "Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up; behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. Judah seems

to have been successful in driving the Canaanites from the mountains, but not from the valleys. I have no idea that the land of Canaan was typical of heaven, the final and eternal abode of the people of God, as many suppose, but I do think it prefigured the gospel church day and state. Judah (our Lord sprang out of Judah) drove the Canaanites (indicative of our sins) from the mountain, (the church) but not from the valley; did not make a general or Fullerite atonement, in other words. But neither did Manasseh, nor Ephriam, nor Zebulun, nor Asher, nor Naphtali, drive them out from the valley, but dwelt with them and made them tributary.

It seems to me that in this circumstance there is a clear illustration of the course pursued by *work-mongers* or worldly religionists who can not only live amicably with their sins, but actually make those sins yield them an illicit tribute of "filthy lucre." But while this state of things was going on, an angel (messenger in the margin, the angel of his presence, or messenger of the covenant) came to Bochim and reminded the Jews of his having delivered them from Egypt, his bringing them to the land that he swore to their fathers, that they should make no league with the inhabitants of the land, but should throw down their altars; but they had not obeyed his voice, and he asks, "Why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you, but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you." "And it came to pass when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept. And they called the name of that place BOCHIM. And they sacrificed there unto the Lord." This word *Bochim* signifies "weepers," or, "the place of weeping." Now, if it is the case, which I think it undoubtedly is, that the land of Canaan and the Jewish people constituted the old heaven and the old earth that has passed away, and that *that* land and people were typical of the church, or new heaven and earth, and that the Canaanites that dwelt therein were emblematical of the sins of God's people which subjects them to an incessant warfare while here, it will not be difficult for the subjects of grace to look over their past experience and find their *Bochims*, or places of weeping, whether they have been actually ensnared by the arminian imaginary gods and taken up their residence among them or not; it makes but little difference, for by nature, whether professors or non-professors, all have the same belief substantially, the same religion, which the apostle calls "our religion." All can live pleasantly with their sins, as did the Jews in the valleys with the Canaanites, and the Rev. managers of the clique that ran the machinery can actually make their sins (false doctrines, hypocrisy and men made institutions, which are the worst of sins) yield them a golden or greenback tribute, as the Jews did the Canaanites. But when the Lord makes his people feel the thorns in their sides, makes them acquainted with their sins that pierce them continually, yea, that prick them in their very hearts, they soon find their *Bochim*. The keen arrows of conviction penetrate their very vitals, and in deep anguish they can cry in the language of the poet,

"By wandering I have lost myself,

And here I make my moan;
O! whither, whither have I strayed;
Ah! Lord, what have I done!"

Here is a *Bochim* indeed, "a place of weeping;" and that is indelibly imprinted upon their minds, can never be forgotten. Well does the humble writer remember this *Bochim*, though reached near half a century ago. His sins seemed to pierce his very heart. Those sins, dwelling with him as did the Canaanites with the Jews, now goaded him like pricking thorns indeed, and like a weighty mountain pressed down his sinking spirits, while a portentous, dark and ominous cloud appeared to roll from Sinai, freighted with destructive curses, caused him to quake and shudder. Its bellowing thunders and fearful forked flashing lightnings seemed to rumble and flash with vindictive wrath around his doomed head.

"How dreadful now my guilt appears,
In childhood, youth and growing years;
Before thy pure, discerning eye,
Lord, what a guilty wretch am I."

What a *Bochim* to a poor, justly condemned sinner! But, could ever such a one have appreciated the worth of a Savior without a revelation of his forlorn, hopeless, helpless and lost condition? Now his Canaanite allies wage a terrible war against him. Without are fightings, within are fears. Little does the poor culprit look for anything short of the vindictive wrath, the sin-avenging wrath of a violated law to burst with all its accumulated vehemence upon his guilty head. But unexpectedly, and outside of all his calculations at such time, although the threatening, sullen, gloomy darkness, its pealing thunders and forked lightnings vent their vengeance; but, lo! not on the condemned criminal; no, mercy's Angel stood prepared to receive all its vindictiveness, and we hear the soothing voice proclaim, "The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

"The gloom from the face of the heavens retires,
The winds hush their murmurings, the thunder expires."

The Sun of Righteousness mounts the heavens with healing in his wings, and all is clear, bright, beautiful, calm. Wonderful to tell. A man has become "a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Here is our "Ebenezer," or "stone of help," as the word signifies; and now the liberated captive may sing with the poet,

"Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home."

The circumstances that gave rise to the setting up of this "stone of help" were as follows: Israel had forsaken the Lord that brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and worshiped Baal and Ashtaroth, the gods of the Philistines. The Lord had let them try their own strength against their enemies without him, which resulted in one defeat after another, until they were convinced that their enemies were too strong for them. The ark of the Lord had been taken from them, and Samuel, the prophet, commanded them to gather at Mizpeh, which signifies "a watch tower." When the Philistines heard that Israel had gathered together at Mizpeh, they came up against them. Through Samuel they called upon the Lord and confessed their sins. Then the prophet took a lamb and made a burnt offering to the Lord, and cried unto the Lord, and he heard him. At the offering of the lamb the Philistines drew near to battle, and the Lord thundered upon them with a great thunder and discomfited them. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh and smote the Philistines as far as Bethcar, ["the house of the lamb."] "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh ["the watch tower"] and Shen, (signifying "change,") and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Is not this a typical matter? Were those Philistines typical of our sins, our worst enemies? Did we enlist in the service of the arminian conditional gods as did the Jews in the service of Baal and Ashtaroth? I think all the subjects of grace will say they did. Then did our sins, as the Philistines did upon the Jews, come upon us when we were brought to Mizpeh, a fearful watch tower, and, while there, our sins appear in full array against us, as the Philistines did against the Jews, and while in full view, and terrible dread of them, the Lord thunders with a great thunder upon them, (our sins,) but wonderful to tell, those sins were laid on Jesus, and there the thunderbolts were aimed, there the sword and stroke of Justice must fall. "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand upon the little ones." But are the ends of justice answered here? Most assuredly they are. The stroke must fall upon our enemies, or sins, and they were laid on the Lamb of God. "Himself bear our sins in his own body on the tree." For this reason, "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." Here we see justice met in all its demands. Jesus was "made a surety;" and when the debtor fails the surety must meet the lawful claim. He was the Shepherd, and the damages of the sheep must be repaired by him. He was the Bridegroom, and therefore must cancel the debt of his bride. He is the head and life of his people, and must be sacrificed for the capital offenses of his people. Hence the scriptures present a beautiful cluster of figures

to illustrate both a legal and vital unity with Christ to his church. "He took on him the seed of Abraham," and therefore "it behooved him to suffer." But so it is, "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," and here we find our Ebenezer, or "stone of help." But how should this amazing condescension melt our hearts in love, wonder and delight. O, how should a sense of our sins that nailed him to the cross smite us with conviction, contrition and deep penitence; when faith beholds him beset by incarnate fiends, eagerly thirsting for his life-blood, while the patient sufferer submits to all the cruelty and indignity without a murmur. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

"They nailed him to the accursed tree,
They did, my brethren, so did we;
The soldier pierced his side, 'tis true,
But we have pierced him through and through."

" 'Twere you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormenters were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief a spear."

Whether our sins are the antitypes of the enemies that dwelt in the land of Canaan or not, we know that when they appear in hostile array against us they are too strong for us. But when the "Stone of help" appears, all is well, the victory is won, the triumph complete, and eternal. And while his infallible promise assures us that we shall finally triumph in and through him, we may confidently and joyfully sing,

"He who hath helped me hitherto,
Will help me all my journey through;
And give me daily cause to raise,
New Ebenezers to his praise."

Your friend and brother, I hope, in indissoluble bonds,

J. F. JOHNSON.

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE LIFE

AND EXPERIENCE OF THE AUTHOR.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., August 1, 1876.

Our family record shows that I was born in Culpepper Co., Va., on the 7th day of November, 1800, after which event my parents, John and Margaret Johnson, (formerly Margaret Sale,) resided in that and in Fauquier Co. for about three years, and then removed to Monongalia (now Marion) Co., W. Va. There were one brother and two sisters older, and two brothers and one sister younger than myself. Our names were consecutively Anthony S., Agnes A., Rebecca, John F., Nathaniel, Charles S. and Lucinda. All have passed away except myself and youngest brother, who now resides in Compton, California. The years of my minority were spent partly in labor and partly in acquiring an education and teaching school. When about twenty-one years old my father advised me to engage in the study of the medical science, which I did, and prosecuted it for about five years. On the first day of March, 1827, I was married to Catharine C. Mellett, and was principally engaged in building and preparing for a living until May. 18, 1828, when my first son, Joseph Alva Johnson, was born, who is now somewhat extensively known in the United States and Canada as an Old School Baptist minister. I was somewhat engaged in the practice of medicine until October, 1829, when we removed to Henry Co., Indiana. There I might have been called a pioneer, though the country was rapidly settled soon after my arrival there. The country was much addicted to chills, fevers and other maladies, and I was soon engaged in a heavy practice of medicine. Long before this I had given the subject of religion some attention, and thought I succeeded pretty well in laying in a stock of what the apostle calls "our religion," but subsequently had been frequently alarmed at the sight of my native sinfulness. But about this time my fears were fearfully intensified. In my first convictions, being unmarried, I was determined not to yield to this state of moodiness, but would drive it away. It would ruin my enjoyment with my youthful associates, which I highly appreciated, being naturally of a cheerful, lively temperament. In order to banish those forebodings, if possible, I became a worse man practically than I ever had been. I had been taught and my pride impelled me to maintain an honorable moral character, and perhaps had succeeded as well as the most of young men. But to let it be publicly known that I was becoming religious would never do, would dash with vinegar the cup of enjoyment with my young companions. I therefore attended frolics, dancing parties and other places of vain amusement, always endeavoring to evade the watchfulness of my parents, who were accused of making me a pet or favorite, and who I always wished to venerate. But now there was no way of shaking off this intolerable burden. I had vainly thought before, when conscious that the eye of God was upon me, that I could appease his wrath by doing better when I got ready; but now that subterfuge was gone. How clearly I now see that had the compassionate Lord been as ready to let me go as I was to wander from him, my

doom would have been terrible indeed. But in the early part of the year 1830 he made me see, yes, *feel* that his arrows of conviction were not to be resisted.

"I felt the arrows of distress,
And found I had no hiding place."

The fearful catalogue of crimes that had polluted my whole former life was indeed a fearful sight to look upon. What I once thought to be little sins now appeared to be mountains. But what was I to do now? The Lord had warned me of my danger, but I had spurned his admonitions. A fearful cloud seemed to be gathering over my guilty head, ominous of a speedy and dreadful destruction. My wailing, my prayers, my entreaties were all unavailing. A wrathful and vindictive God had hidden himself behind the cloud that my prayers could not pass through. The lone desert seemed the most suitable place for me, for I desired not to see or converse with anyone. It was not the fear of hell that so terribly affrighted, but an awful view of my doleful, sinful nature. Sin indeed had become exceeding sinful, and God had forsaken, given me up, as I verily believed. Never can I forget one dreary, gloomy night, when restless, sleepless, mourning, despairing, I lay upon my bed, and thought that I could as well sleep upon a bed of thorns as there. My dear companion asked what was the matter. I told her that I was a poor, miserable, condemned sinner. She then asked me if I thought that the Lord would be just in condemning me. I told her that I could not see that he could be just in doing otherwise. Then she said she did not think I would feel so much longer. I then said I feared I should forever. She had passed through a similar scene not long before.

I lay thus restless until about one o'clock, when falling into a doze or stupor, (could not tell which; have often wished I had remained wide awake, perhaps I would then have known more about the matter,) all at once I was aroused by the sound of my name, not upon my natural organs of hearing, but upon my very heart. I was amazed, and wondered what it meant. One of my patients at the time was an elderly Baptist preacher. Had a messenger from him really called me? All this was momentary; but the voice went on, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee," in the same feeling sensation upon my heart. My trouble and distress were all gone, I knew not how or where. I felt calm and pleasant. I did not know the words were scripture language.

I asked my wife if there was a candle convenient. She asked what I wanted with it. I wanted to see the Bible. "O," said she, "lie still and go to sleep, 'twill not be long till day." I did remain, and had a refreshing sleep, for I had slept but little for several nights. Soon as it was light enough I arose, took the Bible, opened and read, but it was a new book to me. The seals appeared to be opened, and it spoke in the sweetest accents. The promises were *to me*, and every line was fraught with consolation, and I could not conjecture why it was so, but wondered why I had never seen it so before. I read it till perhaps half an hour by sun, when my wife asked me to drive up the cows. I went, and while driving

them through a beautiful sugar grove, I saw my Savior; not with my natural eyes, for my head was down and he was above, it seemed, at an angle of about forty-five degrees, the loveliest object that mortal ever beheld, and I raised my head, expecting to see him with my natural eyes; but no. Yet the most beautiful scenery met my eyes that I had ever beheld. That beautiful grove through which the sun was brightly shining with all his morning glory, seeming to gild every leaf with a supernatural lustre. Had all the leaves been hung with the richest jewels they could not have been more beautiful. The very heavens seemed to declare the glory of God and the firmament to show his handiwork. Overwhelmed and overcome with the sublime and majestic scene, I fell upon my knees and poured out my petitions to my great Deliverer.

For a week or ten days all was bright; my mind was carried back into eternity, and there I saw the way of salvation complete in Jesus, and exactly suited to my case. I believed, too, that what he had done for me was his own work, and that he never would suffer it to be undone.

We went to the next church meeting, and five of us, including my wife and self, related our experiences to the church and were received and baptized on the fourth Sunday in June, 1830.

I think the glorious view of my dear Savior had engrossed my whole attention and diverted my mind entirely from my sinful self, causing me to think my sins were all gone and I should be troubled with them no more. But after continuing for awhile in that happy state of mind I was made to look back at my depraved nature, and there I saw to my sad surprise that I was still in my nature a polluted sinner. Now the startling question was propounded, Am I deceived? Is it all a delusion at last? This set me to searching the scriptures, and I was much relieved in finding that the ancient saints complained of their sinfulness. Paul said he was the chief of sinners near the end of his days. I soon found that my way was not pleasant as I had anticipated. Many times since I have found this verified. Still new trials awaited me. The church increased until another deacon was thought to be needed. This was named at one meeting to be taken under consideration, and choose a deacon at the next. Between the meetings I learned that it had been whispered that I would be a suitable one and was startled at the idea. I set my mind upon another, and busily went around among the members recommending him. While thus engaged an old brother observed that he thought brother Johnson would make a good deacon. I begged of him not to harbor such a thought, pleading the short time I had been a member and my unfitness. The church was convened, voted by ballot, and the Moderator reported me chosen. It was a severe shock. I plead to be excused, but all in vain. I yet think that the choice was premature. I tried to content myself by concluding that I belonged to the church and ought to be subject to her order.

But ere long a still heavier trial awaited me, and I have often feared that it originated in my own imagination. But be that as it may, the thought was impressed upon my mind that I must preach the gospel. But O, who was I? The most unfit, unworthy, unqualified

in every respect. I tried to banish the thought from my mind, but in vain. There it lay like a dismal incubus. What a fool I was to harbor such thoughts. But there they were, a continual burden. But I determined not to let any one know that I ever indulged such thoughts, but would keep them to myself. I could not, however, at all times drive the gloom from my countenance, and from that circumstance, or some other cause, the brethren suspected and would sometimes question me about it; but still I resolved to keep it concealed. One brother unwittingly drew from me an answer to a question that he propounded, which I discovered; begged of him not to say anything about it to anyone, but it was all in vain; it went out and was a general subject of conversation in the neighborhood, and soon in everybody's mouth. I was sent a messenger to a corresponding association. The meeting commenced on Friday and continued until Sunday afternoon. I started home on Saturday after the business and preaching ended, and wending my way along the dismal and gloomy looking road, feeling very miserable indeed, I promised the Lord that if he would spare me until the church meeting I would lay my case before the church and abide her decision. But when the time came I could not take courage to do so. After the meeting was over I was shocked on reflecting that I had lied to God, and it was terrible to think of. On riding along the road with the pastor of the church, with trembling I ventured to ask him the question, "Is it not hard for a man to undertake to do a thing that he knows he cannot do?" He broke out into a hearty laugh. I cannot describe my feelings at that time, for I felt solemn as death. "Now," said he, "you are thinking about preaching." After some conversation on the subject he told me that he had said the day he baptized me that I would have to preach. I told him that I wanted him to advise me what to do. He replied, "I shan't do it, only to tell you to go before the church next Saturday, and tell them what you have told me and take their advice." Here I was in a fix again; could I presume to do so? The day arrived, and after preliminary business of the church was attended to the Moderator observed, "If anyone has anything to say to the church, say on." I sat behind him dumb, (was the Clerk of the church at the time,) but could not venture to speak. He turned to me, and speaking low, asked me if he should name my case to the church. I made no reply. He then told the church that he had had some conversation with me about preaching; and turning to me again, said, "Get up and tell the church how your mind has been exercised." I thought I had to obey, arose, and spoke perhaps ten minutes, so full that I could scarcely find utterance, and then resumed my seat. While speaking I cast my eye over the audience, and could not see one eye that was not shedding tears.

After talking the matter over, liberty was given me to exercise my gift, and then the question came up as to the bounds that should be allowed me. One named the church, another the association, when the old deacon arose and said, "Send it to the ends of the earth;" and so the church decided, giving me liberty to exercise my gift wherever God in his providence might cast my lot. This had not been customary with the churches, and still causes me to think the church reposed an undue confidence in me. After the business

was done the pastor, without consulting me, made an appointment at the church that night for me, telling the brethren to come out and hear me.

Brethren, can you imagine what my feelings were at that time? I had never even attempted to utter a prayer in public. I had once tried to prepare myself for that emergency, for I expected to be called on. Being at home entirely alone one Sunday, I got my pen, ink and paper, with the view of writing out the nicest prayer that I could, then commit it to memory for use when needed. I went to work, and I think wrote four or five lines across the sheet, when I became so confused in my mind I could not think of another word to write, and the more I tried to collect my thoughts the more they seemed to be scattered, until I suppose that my mind was as much confounded as was the language of the Babel builders on the plains of Shinar. I tore off the slip of paper on which I had been writing, (for no one must see it) thinking I would walk out and commit it to memory, and then return and write more. But it is true that I never could, nor ever did commit those few lines to memory, and perhaps know as little to-day as to their contents as any who may read this. I could commit hymns, songs, scripture and other writings perhaps as readily as the most of persons, but this was too much for me.

Was I not in a pretty fix to get up before an audience, open meeting by singing and prayer, then preach? But I got through somehow, but the how I know not. An old brother remarked, "It can't be beat;" meaning, however, that it was true, and the truth could not be beat. After the church started me to work they kept me at it, would generally have appointments for me once, twice, and sometimes three times a week. I believe there were at one time five preachers in the church, (if I could be called one,) and yet I was sent to do nearly all the distant traveling, and sometimes to labor under serious difficulties. Having a numerous family of small children, it often required all my diligence to keep them along; but in the dispensation of a kind providence I was enabled to maintain, raise and educate them in a respectable manner, and have now nine living in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Kentucky.

In the first few years of my ministerial labors I was in the habit of speaking entirely too fast, thereby exhausting my lungs considerably at times, especially when attending meetings for several consecutive days, speaking twice a day frequently, and sometimes even three times in a day. At times I would unconsciously place my hand to my breast as a support, and frequently on retiring to bed would suffer much from pain in my breast, so that some of my friends (not Baptists) advised me to quit preaching, telling me it would bring on consumption. My answer was, if it did, I could not die in a better cause. I determined, however, to overcome the habit if possible, convinced as I was, and still am, that fast, loud speaking is very injurious to the lungs; while I am as thoroughly convinced that public speaking, even if it be loud, will improve the lungs, provided time is given them to recuperate the air-cells to fill up between sentences.

I make these remarks for the benefit of young speakers, and even some older ones, and think I speak advisably when I say that I am a living witness of the benefit of this precaution, having tried and proved it to my entire satisfaction.

After overcoming the habit of speaking too fast, I recollect passing through Ohio, having appointments published for fifteen days, and in that time spoke twenty-nine times, and my lungs were as free and more clear than when I commenced, for I was a little hoarse at the commencement from a slight cold; but after speaking a few times it passed off, and I felt no more of it. But perhaps I have said enough on this subject, and will proceed with my narrative.

I have now been engaged in proclaiming the gospel of my Master's kingdom for about forty years, and at times found it to be the most comfortable employment that I ever pursued; and at other times the most trying, perplexing and humiliating.

How joy-inspiring to the church maintaining the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," with love and fellowship abounding amongst them, and then to feel the presence of the dear Redeemer; the light beaming from his lovely countenance, opening the scriptures to our understanding; to feel the emotions of love to him, to his cause and to his people, and then to find him filling our mouth when we open it to proclaim the animating strains, the heart-soothing messages of the gospel of the blessed God, to be a partaker with the dear saints of the sustaining, refreshing and solacing fruit of the Spirit, consisting of that love that expands the heart with a fullness more than it can contain, and which "runneth over," and spreads like a shoreless ocean, and peace that flows like a river, meandering the streets of the New Jerusalem, and driving from her enchanted precincts the cruel god of war, disdaining all carnal weapons, beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks, with which to cultivate the garden of God; then follows long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; driving from the residence of the family circle of the lowly saints the cruel demons of hatred, variance, wrath, strife, &c., leaving the family in the full possession of the above named fruit, to feast and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, while these beatitudes are participated among and reciprocated by the saints, and while faith feeds for the present, and anticipates the exhaustless fullness of the inheritance of the saints in light. How cheering and how delightful to publish the tidings of salvation under such circumstances.

But on the other hand, to have the sable curtains of night enshrouding us, and spreading a solemn, mournful gloominess over the entire household, no cheering ray to penetrate the doleful darkness, no pleasant fruit or cooling draught to reach the craving appetite, to cool the tongue or quench the thirst of the hungry, craving, thirsty sinner, while the lovely Lamb with his meat and drink and ample fullness seems to be hidden behind the cloud that our prayers cannot pass through; and withal, those demons of war, hatred, wrath, &c., lusting against the Spirit, and blasting like a withering mildew its precious fruit - no gladdening streams of love or charming strains of music to break the solemn gloominess; and if we attempt to raise a song our harps hang silent upon the

willows, and should we attempt to strike a cord it sounds more like a formal requiem than an animating strain.

"In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise;
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies."

Under such circumstances, to attempt to preach the gospel is toilsome work indeed; and we can as soon bring up the sun at midnight, as we can command and cause one ray of light to rise out of and penetrate this chaos of darkness; of which I have had many testimonials, and will here name one or two instances, as samples of the many that have thronged my ministerial pathway.

Not long after my commencement in that solemn and momentous work, I think it was on Monday, a most lovely text of scripture occurred to my mind. It appeared to contain all that was necessary to fill out an ample and complete gospel sermon, and I commenced laying up a store for my appointment on the following Sunday, and continued to lay up all the week. On one occasion I started to get the Bible to read, but turned away, fearing I might see something that would divert my mind from my good text. On Sunday I reached the place of meeting and found the house well filled; my text, however, not looking quite so clear and full as it had done; nevertheless I thought to gather up my store as I passed along. After opening the services and reading my text a dark pall seemed to have fallen over me; I wearied along for perhaps five or ten minutes and sat down, covered with shame and blushing with confusion. Another minister had come to my meeting, and preached to the people. I think now, it was a necessary chastisement.

On another occasion I set out early Sunday morning for meeting, where two of us, both rather new beginners, had an appointment at a private residence, and another good text occurred to me. I commenced preaching on it immediately, (in my mind) and was as merrily engaged at my work as were the birds that sang around me, and really thought that I was doing quite well, rather finely. A sentence entered my mind something like this: Now, if you could do as well when you get there as you do now, you might feel exalted. Well, I tried to pray earnestly to the Lord that I might never feel puffed up over anything that I had done. When I reached the place I found my brother preacher there, and he, generally preferring to speak first, went on. After he was through, I commenced, my text not looking quite so full as it had. I concluded, however, that I would not give it up as I had done before, knowing that there was much contained in the text, and I would find it if possible. I stammered, stumbled and blundered along for an hour, perhaps, or more, and finally quit, worse mortified than before, for I had more fully exposed my ignorance, disgraced myself and the cause that I hoped I loved, and had not only done nothing, but much that was worse than nothing. I went immediately to my horse to go

home, and, as I then thought, to stay there. The lady of the house came to the door and asked me what I was doing. I replied, "Getting my horse." "Let that horse be, until he is fed, and come back and get your dinner," said she. "I don't want any dinner," I replied. "But you are not to go one step till you get your dinner." "I don't want any dinner, sister," I again said." She kept on, almost scolding, and ordering me to come back, but I paid no further attention to her, but mounted my horse and started for home, as miserable as a condemned criminal. I prayed to the Lord for a little relief until I could get home, determined never to make another appointment to preach; but I had not proceeded far until the latter clause of the fifth verse of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord," &c., came to my relief. I quoted on to the close of the eighth verse, and when I was through felt perfectly satisfied and fully resigned. I thought then, and think yet, that if the Lord ever answered a prayer of mine, it was the one that I offered on my way to the meeting, not to be exalted. But it was not answered as I wished it to be, for I wanted to make a fine preach, and then not feel exalted; but the Lord knows best how to humble us. I was reminded of the language of the poet when he said,

" 'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
And he, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way,
As almost drove me to despair."

These cases are presented as specimens of the depressing trials that have besieged me along a large portion of my toilsome pathway, and that have been so discouraging at times that I think I must have given out long ago had I not "obtained help of God."

It has often been my lot to walk through darkness and have no light; still I have been enabled to hope that,

"He that hath helped me hitherto,
Will help me all my journey through."

I have at other times thought that the word of the Lord has been "a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path;" and then would be ready to "mount up on wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint." At times I was disposed to complain of my lot. As before observed, I was sent to do most of the distant traveling, had given up the practice of medicine, did not like it, and did not think that a man could make a good doctor and a good Old School Baptist preacher at the same time, (am not yet certain that he can) besides, it kept me so much from my family and farm. We had settled in a new and heavily timbered country. In clearing out the farm and raising produce and stock for the support of the family, we were closely engaged. My labor was my principal

dependence. I do not think that the churches helped me to the amount of ten dollars in the first five years of my labors, nor did I wish or expect it, for they, too, were in a new country, and had to encounter many hardships. I think that in those five years I was out on my professional work very nearly, if not quite, one-half of the laboring time; but we got along surprisingly. My sons were getting up so as to be considerable help. Joseph A. commenced plowing before he was eight years old, and the two next at about the same age. The land, though, was quite level, clear of rock, and very productive. After a few years we got our farm cleared of timber, and made our money principally by raising and selling hogs. I commenced in Indiana with a capital of two hundred and seventy dollars, and when we left that country for Kentucky, sold property to the amount of twelve thousand dollars; have always had enough to live upon, and such as was better than I deserved, and have no doubt but that I always shall have enough, hoping that I have the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." But the goodness and mercy of the Lord have been truly wonderful to me, in view of all my unworthiness. Of later years my brethren have helped me more, and for the last twenty years I have traveled quite extensively, and in the last passed forty years I feel well assured that I have traveled a distance that would reach more than three, and perhaps four times around the globe on which we live; but with all my troubles, and what I thought to be hardships, I have had some delightful scenes, and, as I hoped, seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and have had satisfactory evidence that it takes but a short enjoyment of heaven's beatitudes, communicated directly from the Lord, to compensate for all the ills that flesh is heir to. To meet the saints in company to worship, to find them all keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to hear them with melodious voices hymning the high praises of their God and Savior, then to hear the glorious gospel of the blessed God proclaimed in all its rich fullness, and joyfully received with all its divine benignity, the emotions of love swelling every heart and beaming in every feature, one hour in such employ inspires more real joy than all the world can give.

"To spend one day with thee on earth,
Exceeds a thousand days of mirth."

And "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." But it is,

"By glimmering hopes and gloomy fears,
We trace the sacred road;
Through dismal deeps and dangerous snares,
We make our way to God."

However, the toils and trials of this mortal life are but momentary, and its boasted wealth and honor visionary and evanescent, while the prospect of a "better country" bears up the depressed spirit of the way-worn pilgrim, and we are enabled to unite in the solemn ditty of the poet,

"Are darkness and distress my share,
Give me to trust thy guardian care;
Enough for me, if love divine,
At length through every cloud shall shine."

Your brother in hope of a better country,

J. F. JOHNSON.

EXODUS 3:1-6.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., January 13, 1877.

MY VERY DEAR BRETHREN G. & B.L. BEEBE: - In the first number of the present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES I discover the following request made: "If it is not asking too much, I would like to have the views of some of the ministering brethren on Moses' vision in Exodus 3:1-6. A.K." If you will not think it presuming in me, I will endeavor at least to gratify the wish of A.K.

Without tarrying to give a detailed history of Moses, I will simply say that he was a Jew, born in Egypt, which is in Africa; but at the time of seeing the vision he was in Midian in Asia, a refugee from Egypt for having slain an Egyptian in the defense of one of his brethren. Here he again avenges a wrong done to the daughters of Jethro, the Priest or Prince of Midian, which paves the way for his marriage to Zipparah, the Priest's daughter. In those instances he displays a disposition to avenge misdeeds, which was a specific trait of his peculiar character throughout his eventful life.

In the first verse on which our views are solicited it is said, "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the Priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." As Horeb signifies desert, solitude, &c., here is typically portrayed another trait of his character, that of a shepherd over a flock in a desert. In this capacity, as well as in others, he evidently exhibits a type of Christ, as he says in Deut. 18:15 - "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken," &c. He not only kept the flock of Jethro in the desert, but as a Mediator vigilantly kept charge of the children of Jacob in their exodus from Egypt, and during

their forty years travel in the wilderness. – Compare with Deut.32:9-12.

Verse 2: “And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” Marvelous phenomenon! A bush burning with a flame of fire in the midst, and yet not consumed. I suppose that this bush, this strange sight, represents the church undergoing the “fiery trial that is to try her.” “Behold, [saith the Lord,] I have refined thee, but not with silver, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” Isa.48:10. And again, “I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, He is my God.” Zech.13:9. Also see Isa.31:9 – “Whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.” The circumstance of this burning bush, unconsumed and inconsumable, should inspire the children of Zion with intrepid courage and invincible confidence, however severe the fiery ordeal through which they may have to pass, for it can but refine them, for our Refiner ever sits in Zion to purify them, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. See Mal.3:3. It was the solace of poor, afflicted Job in his deep distress, that he could say, “When I am tried I shall come forth as gold,” for “the bush was not consumed.” What a wonder! Here is “an afflicted and poor people” in a world of relentless enemies, defenseless as to carnal weapons, their enemies praying for and predicting their speedy destruction, and destroying them at times by thousands, a burning fire in their midst; but wonderful to tell, instead of consuming them, it will carry on a purifying process that will eventually bring them forth pure as the virgin gold. In vain may the cohorts of anti-christ rave against the “little flock,” and boast of their numerical strength, and that they will soon have the whole world to throng their “broad road.” The Old School Baptists alone take courage in the fact that they enter the “strait gate” and the narrow way that but “few” find, but it *only* leads to life; yes, eternal life; and when we consider that the fiery trial is but a brief and momentary one, surely it “is not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”

“And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.” It *is* a great sight truly, why the bush is not burnt. It is yet an inexplicable sight to Moses’ disciples, and has been for many years. They used to say when I was a boy, more than sixty years ago, that these “old Hardshells will all be gone in a few years,” and they continue to say so yet. Mr. Benedict, the New School [so called] Baptist church historian, said many years ago, that before his stereotype edition reached the remote parts of our own country, “they would be among the things that were.” This, however, only proves to us the truth of what Moses said in Deut.33:29 – “thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee.”

I suppose it does seem so to them, because we have no nurseries [Sunday Schools] in which to raise our children for transplantation in our churches; no theological schools in which to manufacture preachers to “convert sinners;” no missionary boards, directors, or

funds to prepare, equip and send out hirelings over sea and land to make graceless proselytes; and then on the other hand, “a consuming fire” burning in our midst all the time, how is it that we are not consumed? But fortunately for this people, this fire consumes nothing that is righteous; and were it not that their righteousness is of the Lord, that he is our righteousness, we should very soon be consumed. Take away their newly-constructed paraphernalia and men-made trappings, and then expose “Moses’ disciples” to such a fire, it would be as fatal to them as the sword of Samuel was to Agag.

“And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.” He “turned aside,” and this may teach us that the natural course of Moses [the law] is not the way to the church. There appears to be something very peremptory in this double call. Is Moses approaching forbidden ground? Yes, for the Lord says, “draw not nigh hither.” Is not this to teach us that by the works of the law, by Moses, we are not to approach to the church?

“Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” In the shoes of Moses, or walking in a law righteousness, we are not to approach the holy precincts of Zion, – must wear a different kind of sandals there, – be “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Yes, that is the way we must be shod to enter that hallowed sanctuary. The adobes of Babylon may be easily entered in Moses’ shoes. But such a fire as there is in Zion would play destruction with them, “filthy rags” and all. Moses’ day is past with Zion now; the anti-typical Joshua now takes the lead, and she must follow him. “Wherefore [says Paul] the law *was* [not *is*, as some say] our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal.3:24-29.

The law with its types and shadows was a directory to bring the children of Israel to Christ; and therefore it “stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation,” and no longer. But after faith is come we are no longer under Moses; he does not bring us to Christ now, for we are not under the law, but under grace. Rom.6:14. We must therefore put off Moses’ shoes, or the works of the law. Moses bore the ministration of death and condemnation, but they must not enter here, for we have a Mediator between Moses and us; therefore,

“Since my Savior stands between,
In garments dipp’d in blood,
Tis he instead of me is seen,
When I approach to God.”

Moses is not permitted to cross over Jordan and enter Canaan, [figurative of the gospel church,] but may climb Mount Nebo, where he could see the promised land; but the Lord says, “Thou shalt not go thither.” There he must die, and there the Lord buried him where he is not to be found. And in like manner, “The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached,” &c., and Moses is buried, “shall not go thither.” Hence the mandate, “Draw not nigh hither.”

“Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Much might be said on these conspicuous names, and the conspicuity of the characters they represent; but fearing that I am already being too prolix, a few brief remarks must suffice.

Abraham, [father of a great multitude,] the father of the faithful in all ages, [if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed,] is to be looked to as a pattern in many instances. The Lord says, “Look unto Abraham your father,” &c. Isa.51:2. Look at his insuperable faith when God promised him an heir. “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” Rom.4:19,20. Then when the Lord called upon him to immolate upon the fatal pile his only begotten son whom he loved, he seemed to forget the paternity of a loving father, and without a word of remonstrance or a moment’s delay, immediately set out to execute the tragical deed. What could he have thought of the promise of God [“In Isaac shall thy seed be called”] now, when he raised the deadly weapon to slay his son? How was it to be fulfilled? The apostle answers this question: “Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure;” for his faith is an invincible bulwark to stay Moses’ approach to the seed of Abraham. Well may we “look to Abraham our Father” in the time of trial.

“The God of Isaac.” In the mournful scene just related, no doubt Isaac prefigured the church. In thus being presented as a sacrifice we have no word of complaint, no act of resistance. How like the children of Abraham, when brought before the dread tribunal of God in our experience! The uplifted sword of justice seems ready to immolate us, but we dare not enter a word of complaint – we cannot resist, it is just. At this critical juncture the sacrificial Lamb is interposed and slain “instead” of us, as the ram caught in the thicket by the horns was slain “instead of Isaac.” Here is another insurmountable barrier to Moses. He has received all that is due him.

“And the God of Jacob.” Here is another of those prominent characters that shall stand out conspicuously to the anti-typical Israel, as “a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill.” In the first place he is a supplanter. He supplants his elder brother, obtains the blessing, but not by his good works, for he was a treacherous boy, but is placed in a position where “the elder shall serve the younger.” He becomes a wanderer and a refugee, and eventually is brought to the “house of God, and the very gate of heaven;” and then he becomes a prevailer, a prince of God. But in a wonderful encounter

he is smitten in the hollow of his thigh, and limps all his days afterward; but the Lord blesses him in a peculiar manner – promises him the land of Canaan with all its riches, which is typical of the gospel church. He is given the name Israel, [a prevailer with God,] entails it upon his entire posterity; and “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation;” and as before shown, Moses must not approach there.

“Therefore Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, fully authorized as a minister of condemnation to execute the rigorous sentences of the law even to death, without pity or mercy upon all that came under his ban, for the stern demands of justice must be administered without favor or affection; his undimmed eye sees every departure from absolute perfection, and his authoritative voice is, “Pay me that thou owest.” But as to the debt and demands of every description that he held against the church of God, [the burning bush,] the Redeemer of Israel has met, canceled, and fulfilled all to jot and tittle, and justice, even the justice of Moses, must defend her. Hence she will eventually “sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” For Moses as a servant must now be as potent in her defense in slaying every intruder that would harm her, as he was rigid in her condemnation when under the law; but now she is “not under the law, but under grace.” Moses is faithful in serving the church, and ever ready to unsheathe his glittering sword to smite the myrmidons of anti-christ, and cut off every other invader that intrudes upon the holy habitation. But Christ as a Son, over his own house, has rendered to Moses all that he claimed, and as the Days Man between that house and Moses; yes, and who dwells in that house, from whence his majestic voice is heard saying, “Draw not nigh hither.” Then, although the billows may roll and rage furiously, and the furnace burn vehemently, still he says, “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 shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.” Isa.43:2.

The foregoing remarks are submitted first, brethren editors, to your judgment; and if deemed worthy the space they may occupy in your columns, then to the consideration of A.K., and others who may examine them. Not having heard the views of any one else on the subject, and feeling my own insufficiency to expound the scriptures. I wish them submitted to the closest scrutiny.

Devotedly, your friend,

J. F. JOHNSON.

HEBREWS 6:4-6.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., March, 1877.

MY DEAR BRETHREN EDITORS: - I will endeavor to answer the request made in the present volume of the SIGNS, No.5, which is as follows:

“Will Elder J.F. Johnson please give his views on Hebrews 6:4-6?”

I have no special light on the subject referred to, nor can I have, unless it comes from “the Father of lights.” The connection reads, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame.” In order to a correct understanding of these verses, I think it well to refer to both the preceding and following connection.

Commencing the chapter, the apostle says, “Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do if God permit.” verses 1-3. Now we cannot suppose for a moment that the apostle would leave all these important matters with the view of abandoning them, not to return to them any more, but he leaves them simply for the sake of the cogent and convincing argument that follows. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened,” &c., “*if* they shall fall away,” &c. Ah, there is the little transitive verb *if*. “If they shall fall.” He does not say that it *is* possible for them to fall away, but if they shall. But what if they should fall away? Why, it would nullify, wipe out, and make void all that he had done for them. His crucifixion, his enlightening, giving them to taste the heavenly gift, to partake of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; his painful, shameful, ignominious death on the cross a total and entire failure, the light that he gave them would be merged in sable darkness, the beneficent gift of that life a total loss, the Holy Ghost of which they were made partakers piteously paralyzed, the good word of God tasted once with all its sweetness is lost in insipidity, the powers of the world to come, with all their potency, completely enervated – lost in imbecile debility. And what if he *should* be crucified afresh, or again? What evidence could we have of success then? If the first crucifixion was a failure, might not the second, the third, or an indefinite number be, as often as we should “fall from grace,” or fail to “use the means?” Surely this would be putting him to an open shameful death continually. How shameful to the name of Jesus! To think that he could not finish his work at once and forever. He said, “It is finished,” and we know that “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.” “He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast.” Workmongers endeavor to press this scripture into their conditional falling from grace theory; but it proves too much for

them; for when their subjects “fall from grace,” as they say, they use great efforts to renew them again to repentance; but this shows the impossibility of their success. Their theory represents the Savior as being like poor, fallen, feeble man, often failing to accomplish his work at the first trial, and as necessarily using the Yankee motto, “Try, try again,” to complete his work.

But the apostle does not finally leave those important principles of the doctrine of Christ, but retakes them in the 9th and following verses, to show the impossibility of their falling away. He says, “But, brethren, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his promise, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec.”

I make this lengthy quotation to show that the apostle, in leaving those important “principles of the doctrine of Christ” for the time being, was for the purpose of making one of the most convincing and irrefutable arguments in favor of them that we can possibly conceive of, and to show in the most palpable manner the futility and fallacy of the Arminian theory. But after exposing that absurdity, he returns to those principles, and their concomitant appendages, and shows unquestionably that where those principles and their adjuncts are found, the impossibility of falling away, because their standing rests not upon works like those of men, which are done and undone, and then have to be done over again, but upon the immutable promise and oath of God, in which it was impossible for him to lie, therefore our consolation may appropriately be called “a strong consolation.” Then, when we can flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, what a hope! Well might the apostle say, on another occasion, that the Lord had “given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.” And what a refuge, too! “The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” That hope serves as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered. That forerunner is Jesus, the “Rock of Ages;” and the anchor grapple into that Rock serves as an all-sufficient safeguard against the winds, the

tempests, the waves and the fire, and insures our safe, triumphant entrance into the heavenly harbor, the ecstatic haven of a peaceful, perpetual, eternal rest.

“We trust upon the sacred word,
The oath and promise of the Lord;
And safely through the tempest sail;
The christian’s hope shall never fail.”

The effectual work of this Apostle and High Priest of our profession is an ample and efficient guarantee, and secures to us forever all the promises, gifts and graces that make up and constitute the “doctrine of Christ.”

“I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing shall be added to it, nor anything taken from it.” If he enlightens us, then, none can add anything to that super-human light, none can diminish it. If he has bestowed upon us a spiritual gift, none can add to, not take from it. If the gift of the Holy Ghost, “He shall abide with us forever;” no addition, no taking from him. If we have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, cursed be he who adds to or takes from that word, and palsied be the arm that attempts to add to or take from that power. Our High Priest, to secure all this to us, has “done marvelous things; his right hand and holy arm have gotten him the victory;” and now let incessant beams of praise break from every tongue, and emotions of joy swell every heart.

Now, brother Riggs, I have tried very briefly to answer your request, and submit the result to our brethren editors. Yours to serve,

J. F. JOHNSON.

GOLAN: DEUT. 4:43.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., 1878.

DEAR BRETHREN EDITORS: - Some time ago I used the above word as a text after which several brethren earnestly requested me to write as nearly as I could the sentiments advanced on that occasion. I penciled down as well as I could the substance of what I said, but concluded that it was not worth the room it would occupy in the SIGNS, and that I would not send it. The brethren however have recently renewed the request, and I have finally concluded to place it at your disposal. The verse containing the word reads as follows: “Namely, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan of the Manassites.”

These are all three significant names, and I think appropriately represent the church in its different phases, as well as Christ her only refuge, for they are the names of places of refuge. In the preceding connection it is said, "Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan toward the sunrising, that the slayer might flee thither which should kill his neighbor unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live; namely, Bezer," &c. This name *Bezer* signifies vine, branches; no doubt alluding to Christ the Vine, and the members his church, the branches. The name *Ramoth* means eminences, high places; I suppose prefiguring the church "set on a hill," according to Matt.5:14, or "established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills." See Micah 4:1; also Psalm 68:15. "The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill, as the hill of Bashan."

Next, we call attention to the name more particularly under consideration, *Golan*; which, like the others, has a two-fold signification; namely, *passage*, *revolution*. Indeed, we may say it has a three-fold signification, for it was a city of refuge.

Should we present the true, biblical sense of the subject, it will no doubt pertinently correspond with the experience of the children of God.

But; first, this word *Golan* signifies passage; but the word *passage* has different meanings, but here we must use it in the sense of transition, or passing from one place or state to another.

Now, if the saints will retrospect their former standing in their fallen head, and then can realize their present standing in their risen Head and in his church, and lastly, their supernal location in their final and celestial abode, they have this passage portrayed in a nutshell. But should we undertake to trace the whole journey, and particularize the many eventful scenes connected therewith, it would take volumes to exhibit them. It is first, passing from death to life. I need not attempt to note all the circumstances connected with this passage. Brethren, sisters, recount your former exercises, and note them as evidences of that passage. It is a toilsome and trying passage, accompanied with a terrible warfare. But amid the din of battle, hark! I hear a cheering voice. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is *passed from death unto life*." This is an important step in our passage along the journey of our pilgrimage, but it is often but the goal of an ordeal through which we must pass – a road thickly beset with severe trials, alluring temptations, deep tribulations, and many other fearful forebodings.

But notwithstanding this seemingly fearful array of relentless foes, we may with holy boldness gird on our armor, unfurl our banner to the breeze, for victory will assuredly perch upon that banner set up "in the name of our God." Although a fearful catalogue of enemies environ and dwell in us, the encouraging and cheering voice of the Captain of our salvation, saying, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name, thou art mine. 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 shalt not be

burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Savior,” [Isa.43:1-3] should cause us to “thank God and take courage,” for we shall pass through the waters, the rivers, the fire and flames unharmed; for “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and are safe.”

“We’re passing through a dreary wilderness,
Oft weary, heavy laden and distressed;
But grace supports us o’er the toilsome road,
And faith insures us final rest with God.”

Again; notwithstanding we are continually waging this uncompromising war with countless hosts of insidious foes, not one of our Captain’s faithful soldiers have ever been destroyed, or even harmed. Then,

“If the passage is gloomy and seems to alarm,
Be fearless, be faithful, you’ll suffer no harm.”

Sometimes it is needful that we should pass under the rod, for he scourges all his children, but this is for our good, and a proof that we are not bastards, but sons. “And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and will bring you into the bond of the covenant.” Ezek.20:37. The bond of this covenant can never be broken, it is an everlasting covenant, “ordered in all things and sure.” This covenant secures a safe conduct or passage through the whole journey of our weary pilgrimage, and a safe and felicitous ingress into the desired haven.

But this word *Golan* also signifies revolution, and a revolution is a great change in government, or, a deliverance from one code of law, and a placing under another or different code, constituting a complete transition. Witness for instance our revolutionary struggle with Great Britain. In that encounter we were delivered from the law of England, and eventually brought under the law or government of the United States. This was effected by a seven-year struggle of the people. But the revolution that we have under consideration is radically different in many respects. And first, suppose that the people of the United States had went to work on the Arminian plan, that is, by serving under, and obeying the laws of the mother country to the letter, and suppose that they had succeeded and pacified the tumult in that way, would that have produced a revolution? By no means; they would still have remained under the same law, as do workmongers by endeavoring to obey the law of Moses, or to be saved by their works.

But secondly, the American Revolution was accomplished by the united effort of the people. It was temporal, not spiritual; it cannot survive the ravages of time. Not so with this revolution. It is true in the first place, that Jesus strictly obeyed the law in all its exactions, but his obedience alone never could have effected a revolution. That law was

violated by all his people, and a violated law knows no mercy – no mitigation short of the penalty annexed to the transgression. If the crime is a capital one, capital punishment must ensue, and when that is executed the law stops there. If an individual commits a capital offense in our country, the law says he shall hang until he is dead, and when dead, that law is a dead letter to that person, it can pursue him no further, it matters not how atrocious his crime may have been; the law ends there. As before observed, Christ's people have all violated the law of God, their crime is a capital one – the penalty is death.

Now, Christ and his people are actually, absolutely and inseparably one. He, bearing their sins in his own body [and his people are his body] on the tree, was crucified, and consequently they were crucified with him; hence, they become dead to the law, the law is dead to them, and can pursue them no further; just as soon would our capital code pursue the man that is hung by the head until he is dead. Of the correctness of these facts we have abundant testimony in the scriptures; we need refer to but a few texts. See Rom.7:5,6 – “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Again, “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” &c. Gal.2:19,20. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Rom.10:4. “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Does not this constitute a thorough and complete revolution? Under the law of sin and death, bound by its manacles and fetters, sin reigns, pursues us, reigns even to death, but there the dominion of the law of sin ends; but now the thorough transition, the great change in our condition takes place, and we are brought under another, a different, and an infinitely superior dominion. Grace triumphs now, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, brought under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that makes us free from the law of sin and death. But further; this revolution was not consummated, as ordinary ones are, by the efforts, struggles and exertions of the people at large. One champion encounters all the hosts of the adversary, and a terrible combat ensues. What a solemn, awe-inspiring scene here confronts us! One solitary, care-worn, marred-visaged individual on the one hand, defenseless, as to carnal weapons, unaided by helpers of any kind; but faced and opposed by hosts of relentless and bloodthirsty enemies, in combination with cohorts of the most powerful earthly government in existence. Suppose the millions of his people could have stood by and looked upon the grand, imposing scene, not knowing the final result, but thoroughly convinced that their eternal destiny hung upon the final event. Now, behold! A banditti gathers round him, armed with weapons of death; no resistance on his part; he is led before an auditory of his most deadly enemies; no objection is made. He is there smitten upon the cheek; no complaint. Thence he is led away to another auditory, vested with authority to take his life; no murmuring. Robbed of his clothing, and a mock robe

placed upon him; no evasion. A crown of thorns is ruthlessly fixed upon his head; he calmly submits. Then he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; he opens not his mouth. Next he is led to the place of execution, as a sheep before her shearers; he is dumb. And then, O tragical scene! With cruel severity his hands and his feet are pierced, jagged nails fasten him to the terrible cross, and there, by a painful, lingering, disgraceful and most cruel death, his life is taken away; and there is the end of the law. It can pursue neither him nor his people in him further. Is not this a complete transition? Here, then, we are delivered from the law, “that being dead wherein we were held;” not by violently opposing, disobeying, and forcibly throwing off the law, as did the American people in our revolution; for the law of sin and death from which we were delivered was holy, just and good, and our God, a “just God and a Savior,” could not disobey or violate a just and holy law. He therefore fulfilled it by suffering its penalty, after obeying it to the letter in behalf of his people. Now they are brought under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes them free from the law of sin and death; and this constitutes a thorough revolution, a complete *GOLAN* for his people.

But further; this *Golan* was a place of refuge and safety for those who were pursued by their enemies, or the avengers of blood. Here, too, is a symbol of the safety of the city of our God. The Lord dwells in this city, and he is her palladium, her safety, her everlasting and all-sufficient refuge. See Ps.57:1; 59:16; 71:7. “The eternal God is her refuge, his everlasting arms are underneath to support her.” Walls of salvation protect her, mountains are round about, forming invulnerable fortifications to defend her. The place of defense for this is the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given them, their waters shall be sure. Isaiah 33:16. In their majestic Head is treasured an everlasting plenitude to supply their wants, with the sure mercies of David to relieve their suffering. What an asylum for the oppressed, the laboring, the heavy-laden pilgrim; and can we not say, with David, “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple.” Psa.27:4.

“Here would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger or a guest,
But like a child at home.”

Yours to serve,

J. F. JOHNSON.

LUKE 16:9.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., 1878.

BRETHREN EDITORS: - I have been requested by a friend in New York [whether a brother or not I am not informed] to give my views on the text heading this article.

I am not certain that my views on the text are correct, for they are different from the views of some of my brethren whom I consider my superiors both in intellect and acquirements. I will simply try to give what my friend has asked for, my "views," hoping that my friend and others who may examine them will strictly scrutinize those views, and detect the error, should there be any.

Then, first, let us attend to the signification of this word "mammon." Those whose views I have noticed on the subject have generally confined its meaning to money, wealth, &c. Although riches may be taken as a part of its meaning, it is not all. In addition to that it signifies, according to Webster, "a place where something is hid; a subterranean storehouse; the god of liberty." I cannot conclude that the word *mammon* here simply means wealth, because the plural pronoun *they*, [they may receive you,] as used in the following connection, cannot correctly be applied to money or wealth; therefore we must apply to it a different signification. Then, suppose we conclude that the word here means, as Webster says, "a place where something is hid;" then the question would be, Where is that place? I think it was among the Gentiles. Now, we know that the Lord had a people among the Gentile nations, and that they were not yet manifested; but were a purchased possession, therefore "hid" from the mortal gaze. We know also, that the Jewish disciples were finally received into the different branches of the church among the Gentiles, and therefore received "into everlasting habitations," for I know of no other everlasting habitation in this world but the church; but "it shall stand forever," "shall never be destroyed."

The Savior doubtless had a specific object in giving his disciples this command and instruction, and it seems evident to me that this object was to inform them that they would fail to find friends among the Jews, and therefore must seek to make them among the Gentiles; for the Jews were then becoming their most inveterate enemies. Will not the preceding connection justify this conclusion? In the commencement of the fifteenth chapter we are informed that the publicans and sinners [Gentiles] drew near to hear him; "and the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Then he spake to them the parable of the lost sheep, of his leaving the ninety-nine "in the wilderness," finding and bringing home the lost one, of the rejoicing over it more than over the ninety and nine that "need no repentance." Then comes the parable of the woman sweeping her house in search of her piece of silver that was lost; and when she finds it, calls her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her. Next we have the parable of the prodigal son and his elder brother, the prodigal to represent the reception of the Lord's perishing children of the Gentiles, and the elder son the Jews, and their opposition to the bestowment of any favors to the Gentiles.

Immediately before addressing the disciples in the language of the text, he presents the case of the unjust steward, who I suppose still portrays the Jew and his religion, which is a fac-simile of the Arminian and his religion today. This unjust steward taught his lord's debtors that they need not pay all they owed, a part would do, and so he was received into their houses. Just so with latter-day workmongers. They get into favor with their dupes by telling them, "O, do the best you can; the rest can be looked over." In one respect, however, they are a little more ridiculous than was the unjust steward. He could not dig, to beg he was ashamed; neither can they *dig*, but they are not ashamed to beg; they *can* beg with a looseness.

If we confine the meaning of the word *mammon* to riches, I can see no propriety in the language of the passage. How is money, wealth, riches, to receive persons into everlasting habitations? But if we apply the word to the Gentiles, all seems to me plain. When Paul testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ, [at Corinth,] "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles." Acts 18:5,6. Again, "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." They went to the Gentiles, were received into the churches – received into everlasting habitations, and there found friends.

This instruction was calculated to have a salutary effect on those Jewish disciples in another respect. It is well known that there was a deep-seated prejudice in the minds of Jews, even the Jewish disciples, against the Gentiles. Witness the case of Peter at Joppa, when directed to go to the Gentiles. See Acts 10:14 &c. Letting the disciples know that they would fail among the Jews, and directing them to make to themselves friends of the Gentiles was well calculated to break down that prejudice. It did break it down, and was a matter of joy to the Jewish brethren to learn that God had "granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life." This brought about a lasting peace and fraternal friendship; so that in this mountain [the church] they were to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Micah 4:3. Here they may meet in a delightful asylum, a friendly sanctuary, where the same Lord over all is rich unto all, both Jew and Gentile that call upon him, making no difference between them. Thus is consummated the assertion of the Savior, saying, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." John 10:16. And again, says the apostle, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." Eph.2:14,15. Since this middle wall of partition, the hand-writing of ordinances, is taken out of the way, nailed to the cross, the

spiritually enlightened Jew and christianized Gentile can, as friends, fraternize each other, and amicably sit down in the same sanctuary, and mutually worship the one same God in fellowship and friendship.

The foregoing views are the best I have; examine them critically, and indorse or reject them, as the scriptures may justify or condemn.

Most respectfully,

J. F. JOHNSON.

JOHN 1:7 & 9.

Clay Village, Ky., Feb. 1879.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - In the 18th number, past volume of the SIGNS, I found the following request:

“Will Elder J. F. Johnson please give his views, through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, on John 1:7 & 9?

G. Blaydis.”

We may give our views on the mysterious, sublime and momentous connection, but to comprehend the profound and majestic secret reaches far beyond the ken of all human knowledge, however aided by the most erudite attainments possible for man to arrive at. The subject reads as follows:

7th verse – “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all [men] through him might believe.”

9th verse – “That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

The apostle says, “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh,” &c. In the connection we have this manifestation brought to view, but I approach it “with fear and trembling.” In the commencement of the chapter it is said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In the 14th verse it is said, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” &c. Mysterious unity. The same character is elsewhere called the Son of God. I John 5:20. “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

In the verse preceding the first one named in the request it is said, “There was a man sent from God whose name was John.” He is elsewhere called “John the Baptist.” Here we have the origin of the Baptists thus called. Others have their *Johns*, &c., from whom they derive their names. The Methodists, for instance, have their John Wesley; the Calvinists [or Presbyterians] have also their John Calvin. So we might trace the names down to the origin of the New School, [Baptists as they call themselves, but it is a misnomer] and they have their Andrew Fuller to head their clan. Then we might refer to the head or starting point of the Campbellites, and they have their Alexander. All these say that the Lord has wonderfully blessed them, because of the rapidity of their increase. Well, if that is good evidence, Joe Smith and Brigham Young have the best of them all. But we have not the slightest evidence that either or any of them were “sent from God,” as was John the Baptist. But God named him, in the temple, when he was promised. And when the child was born, and his mother’s neighbors and cousins visited her, and came to circumcise him, they called Zacharias, after his father. And his mother said, Not so. And they made signs to his father how he would have him called. “And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name *is* John;” for the Lord had named him in the temple.

He came for a witness, to bear witness of the light. That is the legitimate business of the true Baptists yet. All the others have a different mission. Their prime and great mission is to convert sinners to God, as they say. Now, we defy them to prove by the scriptures that there ever was a sinner converted to God, in the sense in which they use the expression, by preaching the gospel, by the apostles or any one else. But the Baptists merely bear witness of the light. Jesus, after opening the understanding of his servants, said unto them, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. *And ye are witnesses of these things.*” Luke 24:45-49. Paul said, “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing,” &c. Acts 26:22. Again, “And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8. In fact, “To him gave all the prophets witness,” forming one dense cloud of witnesses. The Old and New Testaments, as I conceive, form the embodiment of all the testimony of Jesus, and are the two anointed ones that stand by the God of the whole earth. Zech.4:14. “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Rev.19:10.

“That all men through him might believe.” The *all* here [men being a supplied word] simply brings to view “every man that cometh into the [spiritual] world” named in the next verse, and not all that come into the natural world; for there are some that believe not, because they are not Christ’s sheep. John 10:26. There were also others that “could not believe, because that Esaias said, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts,” &c. John 12:39,40. There is but one way to believe on Christ, and that is *through him*. Jesus said, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” John 6:39. It is therefore not the work of man; for his people “believe according to the

working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,” &c. Eph.1:19,20. We can believe on him by no power short of that. Our belief is not under our control at all, for we can believe nothing until compelled by the force of evidence. But says one, “It is just as easy to believe in Jesus as the Savior, as it is to believe that Washington and his army saved us from the British yoke.” Why don’t you believe it then, Mr. Arminian? “Why, I do believe it.” No, you don’t believe any such thing. You may believe that he has done, or will do, a part of the work, if you will “use the means” and perform your part well. If you were as honest as was the old Quaker of Indiana, the argument might stop here. He hated the Old School Baptists, as all other work mongers do, and his wife wished to unite with us; but he told her if she did, he would sell his farm, leave her, and never live with her another day. The old lady was soon upon her death-bed; but before she died, she sent her love to me, with a request that I should preach on the occasion of her funeral, naming the text she wished used, and desired the services to be had at the old residence, “if the old man would allow it.” When the old gentleman’s consent was asked, he said, “I can’t tell thee now, I must study about it.” He finally gave his consent. Some days after the services were over, he was asked what he thought of Johnson’s preaching. “Well,” said he, “the man proved everything he said, by the scriptures, and therefore it must be true; but I can’t believe it, nor will I believe it.” If, therefore, as before observed, the workmongers were as honest as the old “Friend” was, and would tell their dupes that they can’t nor won’t believe the truth, [for they know we preach it] they would probably not deceive so many of them, and would tell the truth for once at least.

Now this word “all” is both an adjective and a noun, and is generally a qualifying term, and very seldom signifies all mankind, in the scriptures, or in common parlance. The connection in which it stands must determine its extent, and if we will notice the 11th, 12th and 13th verses of this chapter, we will see who constitute those that believe. There it is said, “He came to 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.” There are the “all men” that “through him might believe,” and no one ever did or will believe on him before being born of God. As well might we conclude that the natural unborn infant would recognize and believe on its father.

“That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” This is supernatural light – supernal in its nature. With all the vision of the natural man it has never been seen. Our God is the Father of lights; hence there is more than one. Perhaps we have not a more brilliant type of the Sun of Righteousness than the natural sun. Its solar rays enable us to see all that the natural eye looks upon. “In them [the natural heavens] hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” No doubt but Christ is the Bridegroom here portrayed. This Sun throws out deeper, more penetrating light than does

our solar system: “a light above the brightness of the sun.” The natural sun only exhibits to our natural eyes the external or surface of things; but the true light penetrates the deep recesses of our inward faculties. Not a secret thought lurks there concealed from it. It is by this light only that we see that “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” It is a synonym with life. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” When therefore we have that light, we have life, and can feel our sinful carnality. This light is no false glare – no ignis-fatuus, or Jack-a-lanern, but “the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the [spiritual] world.” This text is claimed by Arminians, who try to make it appear that every man that comes into the natural world is illuminated by this light. Now, to stop the mouths of those gainsayers, as well as to instruct the saints, I will venture to give the definition of this word “world,” as defined by lexicographers, and proved by the scriptures. And first, the word signifies *the whole universe* – John 1:10; *the posterity of Adam* – Rom.5:12; *all believers* – John 6:33; *all the elect* – I John 2:1; *the non-elect* – John 14:17 & 17:9; *the present life* – I Cor.7:33; *the earth* – Matt.4:8; *pomp and glory* – Gal.6:14; *carnal wisdom* – I Cor.2:12; *celestial happiness* – Luke 20:35; *great multitudes* – John 12:19; *the Roman empire* – Luke 2:1; *the Gentiles only* – Rom.11:12; *riches, honors, dignities* – I John 2:15.

There are certainly a spiritual and a natural world spoken of in the scriptures. The spiritual world has its spiritual Sun to illuminate it, and the natural world has its natural sun to give it light. Every man therefore that is born into the spiritual world, with spiritual eyes sees and knows the things of the Spirit; and every man that is born into the natural world, with natural eyes, sees and knows the things of nature. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, [or spiritual world] neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

In order that we may see, know and appreciate the things of this spiritual world, “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.” What a glorious light of an all-glorious world, and what wonders it displays to its inhabitants. This is the world from which he “taketh away the sin of it.” John 1:29. This is the world that “God so loved that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. And, the world that through him might be saved. Verse 17. This is the world too, that Christ is the Savior of. John 4:42. This is the whole world also that he is the propitiation of the sins of. I John 2:2. And “this is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

It is an uncontroverted fact that each of these suns throws its light where it shines independently of the means or instrumentalities of men. Who can cause the natural sun to shine on our side of the globe at midnight? Or what would we think of a man that would profess to take the light of the natural sun from a place where it does shine, and carry it to a place where it does not? Would we not at once conclude that he is a maniac or an idiot? There is just as much spiritual mania and idiocy with those who profess to take the light

of the Sun of Righteousness from America, and carry it to Burma, Hindustan, Africa, or any other place where it does not shine.

But the brightest sheen of that luminous Sun is not to be seen here. It would dazzle mortal eyes with immortal splendor. Here we can only “see in part.”

“But O! that brighter world above,
Where lives and reigns eternal love.”

There the glorious Sun will shine, with brilliant, beauteous lustre, where with immortal vision we can look upon, “see him as he is, and be like him.” Then let us, while here, endure with patience the somber clouds, the murky mists and gloomy fogs that obscure our sky and darken our pathway, and sing,

“Though darkness and distress my share,
Give me to trust thy guardian care;
Enough for me if light divine,
At length through every cloud shall shine.”

Your brother and friend indeed,

J. F. JOHNSON.

I CORINTHIANS 1:23,24.

Clay Village, Ky., April 1879.

BRETHREN BEEBE: - With your permission, I will try to comply with the request of brother Nathan Hart, of New Jersey, which is that I should give my views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on I Cor.1:23,24, which reads as follows: “But we preach Christ crucified, unto 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.”

Paul dedicates this epistle “to them that are sanctified [set apart] in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” He exhorts them to be of the same mind and of the same judgment. He has been informed that there are contentions among them. One is of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas, and another of Christ. He asks them if Christ is divided – if Paul was crucified for them? He points out one prime object in the preaching of the

gospel. It was not to convert sinners to God, or make christians of them, as the Arminians now say, but that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. He also informs us that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. He then asks, “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?” He then says, “After that [after he has made foolish the wisdom of this world] 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 to save sinners or unbelievers from their sins, as work-mongers think, but to save or deliver believers from those divisions and other errors to which they are incident. He further says, “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.” The Jews required some tangible evidence that natural minds could comprehend; but Christ told them, when they called on him for a sign, that there should be no sign given them but the sign of Jonas the prophet, which was a very portentous one; but they failed to understand it. The Greeks seek after wisdom, but by that worldly wisdom they could not know God; it must be made foolish before the preaching of the cross could profit them in any degree.

“But we [who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints] preach Christ crucified.” This is a part of the subject on which my brother requests me to write; and O that mine now could be the “pen of a ready writer,” that I could even do half justice to the momentous, all-important theme.

Christ crucified has been the excessive joy, the rapturous enthusiasm of the saints in all ages. Patriarchs and prophets looked forward through the vista of long succeeding ages with emotions of thrilling ecstasy, with assurances and the most soothing anticipations that a crucified Savior was their first and last and only, but steadfast hope of salvation from their sins. “They saw his day, and were glad.” By faith they saw him wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities. They had his infallible promise that he would “ransom them from the power of the grave, redeem them from death.” Hosea 13:14. Those holy seers knew they had all gone astray, but that the Lord had laid on him all their iniquity. Isa.53:6. What a scene for those holy men of God! By faith they could behold the beloved, the dearly beloved Son of God, brilliant with the lustrous glory which he had with the Father before the world was, far, far beyond the reach of enemies to annoy or dangers to threaten him, leave that super-mundane residence, and plunge into this wretched world of suffering, misery, degradation and death. What incentive could have moved the dear Redeemer to condescend to such unparalleled humility? It was LOVE; love was the great moving cause. But love for who? For friends who would lay down their lives for him? No; but for cruel enemies, traitors, rebels. These were the ones for whom he died.

“What pangs are these that tear his heart?
What burden’s this that’s on him laid?”

What means this agony of smart?
What makes our maker hang his head?

‘Tis justice with its iron rod,
Inflicting strokes of wrath divine;
‘Tis the vindictive hand of God,
Incens’d at all your sins and mine.”

Amazing, wondrous, unparalleled condescension! It was love, unalterable love that brought the dear Redeemer down from his supernal abode of excellency,

“To suffer in the sinner’s place,
To die for man. Surprising grace!”

Yes, he was “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal.4:4,5. Notwithstanding all our defilement and wicked rebellion that love could undergo no alternation. As soon could God cease to love his dearly beloved and only begotten Son, as he could the rest of his children. See John 17:23,24. Even sin, hateful as it is in his sight, could never stop the current or change the course of the love of God to his people, disobedient and rebellious as we are. Nay, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Did not wait for us to cease to be sinners and perform a certain routine of good works, that he might save us; that is Arminianism; hence they do not believe that Christ came into the world to save sinners. No; they must cease to be sinners before he will save them. Now we believe that “*there is something done for the sinner.*” “He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” I Tim.1:15. And that salvation was effectually finished by his crucifixion. “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12. Well may we then “preach Christ crucified.”

But we are not to conclude that his suffering on the Roman cross constituted all his crucifixion. See what he endured in the garden of Gethsemane, when he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Here was a cross indeed. In fact, his whole life, from his bed in the manger to his grave, was one continued cross. His people are frequently commanded to bear their cross, take it daily and follow him. Matt.10:3; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23, and many other places. But those commands did not signify that they were to bear the Roman cross, made of wood. Our old man is to be crucified continually, and the apostles could rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Acts 5:41.

But in Jerusalem and on Calvary was a tragical, terrible cross, where he was overwhelmed, immersed, baptized in suffering. That direful scene never had a parallel; yet with all the meekness of a lamb he bore it, while the dreadful vials of wrath were poured out upon him without mixture. Yes,

“He that distributes crowns and thrones,
Hangs on the tree, and bleeds and groans;
The Prince of life resigns his breath,
The King of glory bows in death.

And did he bleed, for sinners bleed?
And could the sun behold the deed?
No; he withdrew his sickening ray,
And darkness veiled the morning day.”

And while the earth was convulsed, the rocks rent, and the veil of the temple severed in twain; man, unmoved, inflexible, callous man, could remain unmoved, except by vengeance and an insatiate desire to shed his blood – to take away his life. And yet for man, the monster man, he died; died to redeem, died,

“To raise him from the depths of sin,
The gates of gaping hell,
And fix his standing more secure,
Than ‘twas before he fell.”

And although his people were guilty as the rest, he “removed their iniquity in one day.” Zech.3:13. It is for the work of that auspicious day that “we preach Christ crucified.”

But although the preaching of Christ crucified is to the saints an animating and reviving cordial, it is to the carnal Jews and other Arminians a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. And how is Christ a stumbling block to the Jews? Well, exactly as he is to all other work-mongers. The Jews claimed to be Moses’ disciples, and if they would only be circumcised, and keep the law, all would be well; and they think they can get along very well themselves. But only preach Christ crucified to them, and by that crucifixion he completely saved his people, without any of their works, good or bad, and the Jew, [or work-monger,] being blind, and cannot see, bang they come against that stumbling block, and into the ditch they go.

“And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offense,” &c. Isa.8:14. “And to the Greeks foolishness.” The Greek, whether an ancient or modern one, is a real wiseacre; must have a fine stock of the wisdom of this world.

The modern one, if he is not of the ancient order, must understand their language, by which, and by other scholastic attainments, they seek after wisdom; but instead of asking it of God, they go to their theological schools, where they learn to “teach for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matt.15:9. Talk to them about the crucifixion of Christ saving any one; foolishness! They will begin directly to cry out about their *Dianas*, or other imaginary gods. It matters not what they call them; they may call them by the name of our God; but hear them talk about theirs, and you will soon discover that he is as unlike ours as night is unlike day; so that when they give him the name of ours, it does not make him at all like ours, either in his nature or in his works. He will not save them until they do their part of the work; “but wants to save everybody,” as one told me recently, if they would only repent and believe.

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” When our God calls, “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live;” it matters not of what nationality they may be, whether Jew or Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, they must hear, and that call is the funeral knell to all their former boasted powers. The power of God and the wisdom of God give potency and efficacy to that call. He “who hath saved us, [not who will save us, if we do our part,] and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works,” [II Tim.1:9,] calls from death to life, “out of darkness into his marvelous light.” I Pet.2:9. This is an effectual calling; for “whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Rom.8:30.

“Christ the power of God.” Omnipotent, regal, reigning power. “All power in heaven and earth.” Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. He has power “to subdue all things unto himself.” Phil.3:21. Power to subdue our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:19. And blessed be his name, power on earth to forgive sin. This is authoritative power, exercised because he has suffered for the sins of his people, redeemed them from under the law, satisfied all the demands of justice; therefore he can with authority forgive them. Besides, he has power over all the enemies of his people, to shield them from all danger, and control all things for their good. The last enemy is death, but he has conquered that; but that is not all, for he has power to raise us from the dead, to change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself, [Phil.3:19,] and thus cause “this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal to put on immortality.” I Cor.15:53. And after having done all this, he has power to induct us into his glorious presence, where there is fullness of joy, and at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. Psalm 16:11. Truly, he is “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

This wisdom is infinite, limitless. It was “set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” It rejoiced in the habitable part of his earth, and its delights were with the sons of men. Prov.8:23, and onward. That wisdom had not only comprehended,

but fully grasped the gracious and glorious way of the salvation of sinners from their sins, made a complete revelation of that wondrous way, and so completely comprehended all things in relation to the momentous work, as to render a failure in any part of it utterly impossible; and therefore should incite the most sublime praises and hearty thanksgivings in every redeemed, grace-given subject of his kingdom. He not only has this wisdom intrinsically, but when asked for it in faith by his children, he gives it to them “liberally, and upbraideth not.” James 1:5. It is a precious boon, for it is “pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” James 3:17. How different from “the wisdom of this world,” which is “earthly, sensual, and devilish.” The dear Redeemer is even “made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” And besides all this, his wisdom, completely comprehended all the machinations and devices of our enemies, and exactly how to frustrate them.

“Though many foes beset our road,
And feeble is our arm,
Our life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm.”

This wisdom, too, has amply provided all that is needful to supply and support us in time, all that is necessary to fully beautify us in eternity. What a prospect is before us! What ecstasy awaits us beyond the end of our weary pilgrimage here!

“Fair, distant land – could mortal eyes,
But half its charms explore,
How would our spirits long to rise,
And dwell on earth no more.

No cloud those blissful regions know,
Realms ever bright and fair,
For sin, the source of mortal woe,
Can never enter there.”

Your brother in hope,

J. F. JOHNSON.

HEBREWS 9:27 - THE JUDGMENT.

Clay Village, Ky., September 1879.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - Sister Foree, of Turner's Station, Ky., requests me to give my views on Hebrews 9:27, and as you have recently written on the same text, I should think it unnecessary, were it not her request that I should more particularly treat on "the judgment" contained therein. It reads, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."

The apostle in the preceding chapters shows the wide contrast between the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, as well as the superiority of the latter over the former.

None of the offerings under the former covenant could put away sin, but the latter did put away sin by the sacrifice of himself – "by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb.10:14. The entrance of sin into the world brought death with all its woes; hence judgment passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, and hence the dreadful sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

Thus it was appointed unto men once to die, and after this [appointment] the judgment. As my sister requests my views particularly on this judgment, I will now proceed to give them. The passage is frequently quoted, "after death the judgment." I may differ with some of my brethren on this point, but if wrong, I desire correction. "After this the judgment." After what? The word *this* is a definite adjective, denoting a specific person or object. I think undoubtedly that it is after the appointment, and not after death, for the judgment immediately follows the appointment. "And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" and thus "the judgment was [in the past tense] by one to condemnation." And again, "As by the offense of one, judgment came [in the past] upon all men to condemnation." Rom.5:16,18. I recollect once hearing a Methodist preacher comment on this text, and he seemed to have no use for any part of it except the death and judgment, which he used for the purpose of alarming his hearers, or scaring religion into them. He quoted as usual, after death the judgment. He dwelt alarmingly on the great day of judgment after death; had the Judge seated upon his throne, and each individual arraigned before him, and witnesses summoned, himself to be one of the principal ones. "But," said he, "there are some that don't believe in such a judgment as this, but the scriptures prove it too plainly to be denied." He then referred to John 16:8, "He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment *to come*," emphasizing very emphatically on "to come," when it was his own interpolation, and did not belong to the text, as he might have discovered by quoting on to the close of the 11th verse, for there it is said, "the prince of this world *is* judged" – in the past. I look for no other judgment after death but the passing of the sentence, and think that is all that the

scriptures give any account of. I therefore think, as before quoted, that judgment has already passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. I have understood that Elder Leland calculated in his day, that if all who had lived since the creation, and all who then lived, were then on the earth, they would be sixteen deep over its entire face. Should that be the case, [and I think the calculation a reasonable one] it would probably require some thousands of years to arrive at a final decision according to the opinion of the Methodist preacher. When the apostle says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." There will be no further need of litigation there. How blind, to conclude that the Lord will need witnesses to prove what men have been doing here! Then, as before observed, I think that judgment passed upon all men immediately after the appointment that men should die. "The judgment was by one man to condemnation."

"So Christ was once offered." As it was appointed unto man once to die, so it was appointed that Christ should be offered to die. Here is a great mystery. Christ was offered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and when his enemies crucified him they did no more than what God's hand and counsel before determined should be done. Acts 4:28. And thus they fulfilled the scriptures in condemning him. We sometimes hear great lamentations over the entrance of sin into the world. I think it was just as impossible that it should fail to enter, as it was impossible that Christ should fail to save his people from their sins. Had it not so entered, the work of salvation would have been a nullity. I am confirmed in this opinion by an expression of Paul in Rom.6:17, where he says, "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin." And why thank God for that? Evidently, had we not been the servants of sin, we could not have been the subjects of salvation. It has been a query in my mind whether the condition of man, so far as this world is concerned, was really worsted by the entrance of sin into the world. Let us sit down in Adam's condition before the fall, without the necessity of labor, speculation, or the need of gain of any kind – everything plentifully provided for our sustenance, without the intervention of thorns, thistles, or other noxious growths, to give us necessary exercise, how miserable would we be! Let us try it now, even if everything needful were afforded us, how would we enjoy ourselves? I verily believe that when the earth was cursed for man's sake, it was for the sake of his enjoyment. Had we not been thus condemned there would have been no necessity for the justifying righteousness of the Savior. Had it been the will of God to prevent the entrance of sin into the world, he could, no doubt, have done so; but he did not prevent it, and therefore judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Thus the entrance of sin into the world, and death by sin, opened the channel for the great and mysterious work of the salvation of sinners from their sins, as well as for the display of the justice of God in the condemnation of ungodly sinners for their sins.

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” As it was appointed of God that man should die, as before observed, so also it was appointed that Christ should be offered and die for the sins of his people.

“When Adam to eat of the fruit was inclined,
It answered the purpose Jehovah designed;
No purpose of wisdom was altered thereby;
He fell for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

He therefore, by the appointment of God, of necessity, must “himself bear our sins in his own body on the tree.” What a wonderful exhibition of the love, mercy, grace and goodness of God! And with astonishment we ask, Why such love to such objects?

Imagine the well-beloved Son of God in the bosom of his Father, and all brilliant with glory before the world was, beyond the reach of enemies, of sorrow, grief or suffering of any kind; yet when sin entered into the world, with all its tragical calamities, when he saw his brethren, the gift of his Father, going down into a terrible whirlpool, sinking into a miserable chasm, a horrible pit; behold, the dear Redeemer leaves that Elysium adobe, bending his course downward to this world of wickedness, to suffer the affliction consequent upon our sins. How amazing too, that “it pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put him to grief.” Here was;

“Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy from heaven to earth came down.”

How we should rejoice in the immutability of God’s love; for, could sin, death and hell combined have changed that love, could he ever have offered his dear Son “to bear the sins of many,” even the sins of all his people?

“And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.” Those who look for him, of course, are those who have seen him, or tasted that he is gracious, and none who get that taste ever lose the relish for it, but can sing with the poet;

“What peaceful hours I then enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still.”

To look for him in the true sense of the text, I think, implies an anxious desire for him, and where is the child of grace that has not that desire? When passing the deep waters of tribulation we look for him, for we know that in him only we can have peace. In the cold, dark and dreary night we look for him, for he alone can give us light. When hungering and thirsting after righteousness, we look for him, knowing that he can fill us with the

bread and water of life; aye, he is “made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption;” he is all in all to us. Yes, we shall look for him even when the cold arms of death are about to enfold us. Then with what anxiety shall we be “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” And when he appears the second time, O how vastly different from his first appearing! Not as the seemingly feeble babe of Bethlehem, consigned to a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn; not as when borne away to Egypt by his parents, to escape the wily vengeance of the Roman Procurator; not to fast forty days and nights in the wilderness; not to wear that “visage marred more than any man, and his form more that the sons of men;” not to receive the calumny, the reproach, the indignity that was unsparingly heaped upon him while once inhabiting this wicked world; not groaning and sweating drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane; not buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross, to groan, bleed and die under the ponderous weight of the sins of his people; no, but without sin unto salvation.

No tongue can tell, nor pen delineate the majesty, splendor and unsullied glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ when he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.

My dear sister Foree, brothers, sisters, all, let us extol, reverence, adore and praise his holy name, and rejoice that he now reigns, and must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

“That head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns,
The heavenly victor now.”

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death,” and after that destruction, with what rapture, with what excessive ecstasy shall we hail the second appearing of the majestic Savior, enrobed in all the transparency of his brilliant glory, and O, amazing and transporting thought, when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,

“When shall I reach that happy place,
And be forever blest?
When shall I see my Father’s face,
And in his bosom rest.”

In love permit me to remain your brother,

BETHLEHEM EPHRATAH.

Clay Village, Ky., 1880.

BRETHREN BEEBE AND SON: - I propose writing a little on the name, or names rather, of that celebrated city called *Bethlehem Ephratah*, as found in Micah 5:2 – “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

Although I have written the whole verse, I intend to confine myself to the names, their significance, and some important reminiscences that cluster round that city, made so famous for being the birthplace of the King, the Savior, the Redeemer of Israel. Its situation is about six miles south of Jerusalem, and it is called also “the city of David.” The name *Bethlehem* signifies “house of bread.” That of *Ephratah* signifies “abundance; bearing fruit.” I cannot say why it was called by both of these names, unless it was more fully to exhibit its significance. It was the birthplace or residence of David, and at least five of his ancestors, all of whose names were conspicuously significant or typical, as most of those ancient names were. They were as follows: *Elimeleck* signifying, “My God is King;” *Mahlon* signifying, “Song; infirmity;” *Boaz* signifying, “Strength;” *Obed* signifying, “Servant; workman;” *Jesse* signifying, “Gift; oblation;” *David* signifying, “Well beloved; dear.”

In treating on the significance of these names, we will first observe that Christ and his kingdom were the all-important and absorbing themes of the patriarchs and prophets. Abraham rejoiced to see his day; and he saw it, and was glad. John 8:56. And again, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” [Rev.19:10] in many instances, no doubt; but many of the names given to persons, places and things, were from a prophetic view of future events. In other cases, God evidently caused circumstances to transpire that would suggest and cause certain names to be given. When Abraham and Sarah were told that Sarah should have a son, they laughed, [Gen.17:17; 18:12;] and when that son was born they called him Isaac, which signifies laughter, or joy. When Isaac’s twin sons, Esau and Jacob, were born, the latter had the former by the heel, and they called him *Jacob*, signifying supplanter, or heeler. He afterwards supplanted his brother.

The first one of those conspicuous characters of Bethlehem Ephratah whose name we shall consider is *Elimeleck*, “My God is King.” Whatever may have occurred to fix the name on this significant character, it evidently had a particular significant bearing; and I

think it doubtless has reference to that majestic, regal Ruler named in the text, that is to be ruler in Israel, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” The mere calling the name of the individual was calculated to direct the mind of the Israelites to that supreme Ruler whose kingly power had been so miraculously displayed in the land of Egypt, in delivering them from bondage, in the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, in raining bread from heaven when in the barren wilderness, in the terrible display of his majesty when giving them the law on Sinai, in driving out seven nations from the promised inheritance, in bringing them into a land flowing with milk and honey. No wonder, when reviewing these, and many other equally marvelous transactions performed by the King of Israel in behalf of his peculiar people, that one of them should say, in the naming of his son, “My God is King.” I suppose that this name would also prophetically and typically point to the Ruler of the universe as King of kings and Lord of lords, as well as to the King of Zion.

The next name claiming our attention is *Mahlon*, and it signifies “Song; infirmity.” Songs are indicative of merriment, joy, thanksgiving, and of triumph or victory. I know of no song spoken of in the Bible that would be more likely to suggest this name to an Israelite than that of Moses and Miriam, repeated, the first in Exodus 15:1, and the second in the 20th of the same chapter, where Moses and the children of Israel sing, “I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.” Miriam and her minstrels “answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.” The same name too might indicate the future songs of Zion, as spoken of in the Psalms of David, 28:7, 40:3, 69:30, and many others; and also in Isaiah 26:1, “In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks;” and also in Revelation 5:9, 14:3 & 15:3. But notwithstanding the singing of all these songs of joy, thanksgiving and triumph, “infirmity,” the other meaning of the name, was interwoven in the character of all the songsters.

Then we have *Boaz*, signifying “strength.” This name seems to exemplify the almighty power of that strong arm or hand that wrought such wonders, not only in the deliverance of the peculiar people from bondage, but also in the acts performed by him in their defense and repeated deliverances from their numerous and potent enemies, proving himself to be emphatically “the strength of the children of Israel,” as the prophet has said, “Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” Isa.26:4. There also seems to be here a typical portrait of that strong Deliverer that “shall come out of Zion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” Romans 11:26.

Next comes *Obed*, meaning “Servant; workman.” May not this name refer not only to Moses, who was so frequently called and looked up to by the people of Israel as the servant of God, but also to him as the prototype of him who is spoken of in Isaiah 42:1, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth?” Or to him who “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant?”

Phil.2:7. The other signification of the name may have reference to the number of workmen engaged, first in building the tabernacle in the wilderness, then the temple at Jerusalem, which were types of the church; and secondly, of her workmen that “needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;” or those “who labor in word and doctrine.”

Then we have *Jesse*, “Gift; oblation.” This is the immediate father of David, and I think that in this significant name is a pointer or typical directory to that unspeakably precious “gift of God,” or bestowment of his dear Son to his people, that infinitely transcends in super-excellence all other gifts, the intrinsic worth of which will remain forever incalculable. And what an oblation! An atoning sacrifice – one offering, that “perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Heb.10:14. It may have had direct reference to the mere gift of a son to Obed; but I think it undoubtedly had reference as a type to that inestimable gift of God, and that all sufficient oblation that completed the supernatural work of eternal redemption at the tragical scene exhibited on Calvary.

Next we speak of that conspicuous character, *David*, “Well beloved; dear.” We cannot suppose for a moment that this appellation was accidentally imposed on this individual. David was a brilliant type of Christ, who speaks of him all through the Psalms as of himself, and of whom Christ is said to be “the Son,” repeatedly, and “the seed of David according to the flesh.” Rom.1:3. He was the anointed [authorized, empowered] king of Israel, and was said to be a man after God’s own heart. I Sam.13:14; Acts 13:22. As the name of *David* signifies “well beloved,” so Christ was the beloved Son of God, declared to be the beloved Son of his Father, both at his baptism and his transfiguration on the mount. David was “dear” to the people of Israel, and dear to the Lord. He was therefore “well beloved and dear,” as was his Anti-type, to his Father and his people.

Last and greatest of all was born in Bethlehem Ephratah, Christ Jesus – the anointed, empowered Savior. Well might it be called the “House of bread.” “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” John 6:34, 50. It is life-giving bread; yes, eternal life. Then think of its boundlessness, its inexhaustible plenitude! It has afforded a rich and delicious repast for the saints to feast upon in all past ages, and will in all ages to come; and when time shall be no more, eternity will not exhaust or even diminish its fullness. But in order to appreciate this bread we must have both the appetite to relish, and the faculty by which we can feed upon it. The Lord alone can give us the appetite; then we feed upon it, hunger for it. But our carnal nature has no faculty with which we can eat the bread of life. Now let us consider the faculty, personal quality or ability to eat the bread of life which came down from heaven, and was developed in Bethlehem, the “House of bread.” It is by faith only that we can eat the flesh of the Son of man, and except we eat it, we have no life in us. But what is faith? “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Heb.11:1. We wish to notice this faculty or qualification, by which

this bread is eaten, a little in detail, for it is a matter of vital importance, as we have no life [eternal life] except we eat it.

We have a number of preachers in this country who tell the people the evidence or belief is all that is necessary in order to be saved. "Only believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," they say, is all that is required. Well, the devils believe that, and what would they do if one of those devils should present himself as a candidate for admission into one of their so-called churches, and tell them that he believed that Jesus is the Son of God? They must accept him, or reject their rule, for it is the only test they have for membership. But let us examine this faculty a little further, for its importance requires that the people of God should distinguish between this living faith and one that is dead. See James 2:17,26. It is only by faith that we eat this bread, and we have shown that this living faith is both a substance and an evidence. We will suppose a case. Suppose then, that A is traveling on a wearisome journey, and is very hungry. He meets his friend B, and says, "Friend B, I am hungry." "Come to my house," says B, "I have plenty." Now he has an evidence, but this does not satisfy him. Perhaps he wants a stronger evidence. He goes to the house, and presently sees the table spread, and furnished with all he can desire. That is as strong evidence as he can wish. But does that satisfy his appetite? No. What will? Let him eat, for he would starve to death on the best evidence, without the substance. And when one has "tasted that the Lord is gracious," the language will be, Lord, evermore give me this bread.

Let us next consider *Ephratah*, "Abundance; bearing fruit." How shall we attempt to compute the abundance of this bread? And not only bread, but everything that the most capacious conception of saints can imagine, and still more. Imagination's utmost stretch in wonder dies away. It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in him. Col.1:19. Here is unbounded, illimitable, eternal love in all its abundance. A preacher once said that when he attempted to feed the saints out of this ocean of love, he felt like a child at the edge of the edge of the ocean, dipping it out with a teaspoon; but I ask, where is the edge? Boundless, fathomless. Here is abundance of joy, too. In his presence is fullness of joy; at his right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Psa.16:11. "Joy unspeakable and full of glory." I Pet.1:8. Here is abundance of grace, too. "For if by one man's disobedience death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom.5:17. "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14. But why attempt to itemize? In this blessed One there is everything that can feed, feast, happyfy or glorify the saints in all places, all time, all eternity.

Ephratah also signifies "bearing fruit." This I suppose has reference to the fruit of the Vine and its branches, for the branches and fruit come out of the Vine; and what delicious, heart-soothing fruit it is. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, &c. Indeed this fruit permeates all that is good; "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." Eph.5:9. Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye have not chosen

me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” John 15:16. “The tree is known by its fruit.” How commendable to see the branches manifest their vitality in the Vine by their fruit. “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Psa.126:6.

The names of the persons and place treated on in the foregoing remarks indubitably have a momentous significance; but whether the deductions drawn from them are in accordance with the scriptures, others must judge. But the climax of the celebrity of this city was the birth there of Christ Jesus, [anointed or empowered Savior,] a little more than one thousand, eight hundred and seventy-nine years ago. That all-important circumstance should recall to the mind of the people of God a reminiscence worthy of their most profound and solemn meditation. But to undertake now to dwell upon the superlative work, the sublime character, and the majestic mien of that august One, opens a field too expansive for me to enter with my feeble capacities. I therefore submit the preceding remarks to you, brethren editors, to dispose of as you think best.

Brother Beebe, as I have heretofore silently listened to the misrepresentations and calumnies that have been published and circulated through the country against you, brother Dudley, myself and others, perhaps it will not be amiss for me to make a few remarks here on that subject, as my silence might be construed into consent. If I know my own heart, I desire to “recompense to no man evil for evil.” Our false accusers may be brethren misinformed, or they may be open enemies. But in either case, “we should be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons.” Col.3:25. Our dear Savior has said, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely* for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.” That should be a sufficient solace, without doing or wishing them evil. I have heard of an individual who was pathetically complaining of bad reports circulated through the neighborhood about him. “O,” said his neighbors, “never mind; there are always some who will raise and circulate false reports about us.” “Ah,” said he, “if they were false, I would not mind them; but every word is true.” Those are the reports that hurt. If we can only conduct ourselves in such a way that our enemies shall have nothing bad to say about us that is true, we shall be fortunate indeed. The Lord knows our hearts, and also the hearts of our accusers. If we are really what we profess to be, the Lord works *all things* for our good, even all the wrongs we may suffer. Then we should bless them that persecute us; bless, and curse not. We dare not shun to declare all the counsel of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, whether they curse or whether they bless us; and then let us calmly and patiently take the consequences. And may the Lord grant us dispositions to pray for and forgive our enemies for his dear name’s sake.

In much humility, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

ALL THINGS – ROMANS 8:28.

Clay Village, Ky., February 1880.

MY DEAR BRETHREN BEEBE: - In the third number, present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, I find the following request: "I desire the views of our dear brother J.F. Johnson on Romans 8:28. Whether the *all things* mean natural things or not?"

The whole text reads thus: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

The apostle was not guessing at things here, and I cannot imagine how a more comforting and encouraging expression could be formed out of words. He knew what he affirmed, and he knew its importance to "them that love God," and therefore would leave them without the shadow of a doubt. I wish to make some remarks on the text found in Eph.1:11, as I consider the two passages intimately connected. There it is said, "In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Here we are informed that God works all things, and in the text under consideration, that he works them all for good to them that love him, and are the called according to his purpose. But my brother desires to know "whether the *all things* mean natural things or not." I answer unhesitatingly, that spiritual things and natural things, great things and small things, good things and bad things, things in heaven, things on earth and things under the earth, ALL, all things work together for good to them that love God, as I shall now try to evince. I suppose it will be conceded by all who are "spiritually minded" that all spiritual things are managed or worked for the good of God's people, and for them exclusively. They were given us in Christ Jesus for our good before the world began. No doubt my brother has realized this in everything that he has enjoyed. It is equally evident that natural things also are for our good. Our food, drink and raiment are all for our good. The natural earth that we tread upon which produces our food, raiment, &c., the rain and the snow that falleth upon the earth and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, are evidently for our good. Our trials, afflictions, disappointments and temptations, that seem for the time being to be against us, are often proved by after experience to be for our good. When the sons of Jacob brought to him the news from Egypt where they went to buy corn, he said, "All these things are against me," when in reality they were opening the way for the joyful meeting of his supposed long lost son Joseph. David said, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I have kept thy word."

And again, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." Psa.119:67,71.

I am here reminded of a circumstance that took place with brother Beebe and myself a number of years ago. We had been away attending some meetings, and started for home, eager to meet a certain train of cars to return on, but they had just left when we reached the station. We were disappointed, but it was likely for our good, for we afterward learned that that train was terribly smashed and a number killed and many seriously injured.

Again, the apostle says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Why? "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." James 1:2,12. I have said that great things and small things work for our good. "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." Psa.126:3. These great things include spiritual and natural ones innumerable. All spiritual things that he has wrought in and for his people are great things, and all for their good. He rebukes strong nations for the good of his people; makes kings their nursing fathers and queens their nursing mothers; subdues kingdoms for them. And in connection with the great, we may include the great work of redemption, all that pertains to the salvation of his people; and to accomplish these great things he uses the small things. To accomplish the great deliverance of his national people from their bondage in Egypt, he used the frogs, the lice, the flies, the locusts, &c.

Imagine the frogs bubbling up out of the rivers, and there they go, hop, hop, hop, the Lord directing every hop to the very house, bed-chamber, bed, oven and kneading-trough where he decreed it should go. Then Aaron stretches his rod over the dust of the earth, and instead of dust the earth is alive with lice; and here they go, every step of every louse to every Egyptian where the Lord sent it; not a stray louse on Pharaoh or any of his hosts. And the flies. Go along the border of Goshen, where the Hebrews dwell; look on that side where the Egyptians dwell, and see the air swarming with flies, and on the Hebrews side not a fly, for God had said no flies should be there; and when they strike the dividing line, they stop or turn as though they had encountered a stone wall. Then the locusts; and other miracles are worked there by the Lord, but none of the plagues troubled the Lord's people; he was working all for their good. Finally Pharaoh is humbled and subdued, and the Lord's people liberated. But I must not note here all the minute things that occurred to the Jews on their long journey to the promised land. One more circumstance, however, I will refer to. When they were about to enter that land the Lord told them, saying, "I will send hornets before thee, [they are little things, too] which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite and the Hittite before thee." And he did it, for he says in Joshua, "And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out," &c. This kind of warfare looks a little ludicrous. What must those "ites" have thought on seeing the country swarming with hornets? And presently they feel them, pop, pop, pop. I can't tell how they knew where to

get rid of them; but they must leave the country, for the Lord said they should drive them out.

All things work together for good to God's people, it matters not how small, if it is large enough to call a *thing*. See myriads of motes and tiny insects dancing in the sunbeams. Think you they are frisking about there at random? God "worketh all things." I do not know what he wants with those little things, nor do I know what he wants with a mammoth; but he made them all, and, of course, has use for them all. If it is best for one of his people to take him out of this world of trouble, [it is always best for them when they are taken] he can do it by sending a mote into the eye, produce inflammation there, extend it to the brain, and do it as effectually as with a thunderbolt. Or if it is his will to take an enemy away from them, he can do it in the same way. There may be smaller things yet, but he works them all. I have no idea that the fiercest hurricane that ever blew has ever carried a particle of dust farther, or suffered it to fall short of where God predestinated it to stop. One has said, and I think truthfully, "If providence should be taken by surprise, by the casual impinging of an accident, one fortuitous grain might dislocate the banded universe. The smallest seeming trifle is ordered as the morning light, and he that rideth on the hurricane is pilot to the bubble on the breaker."

I have said that good things and bad things work together for good to God's people. That good things work together for their good, I suppose is evident to my brother, and is no doubt often experienced by him; but that bad things do, may not appear so obvious to him; but there are plenty of circumstances recorded in the scriptures evincing the fact. When the brethren of Joseph sold and sent him to Egypt as a slave, all will admit that it was bad in them to do so; for Joseph told them afterward that they thought evil against him, but God meant it for good. Gen.1:20. And after he was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, that libidinous wife of his acted very badly in telling a falsehood on him and having him imprisoned in a dungeon for his virtue; but that was only another step toward his greatness. Then the king's officers must be imprisoned, and must dream dreams, and Joseph interprets them. Then Pharaoh must dream. He interprets the king's dreams, and then is made governor over all Egypt. Then see the result to his father's family, as well as to his self.

But there are other bad things, worse, if possible, than the ones named, that have worked for good to God's people; and I know not but that all the bad things that have ever been done have been worked for the glory of God and the good of his people; for the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. Psal.76:10. Reference to one other circumstance will perhaps be sufficient on this point, and that is the crucifixion of the Savior. Could there be more heinous, diabolical wickedness than the murdering of the innocent Lamb of God on the Calvary cross? And yet God so overruled the whole matter that it turned out to be *magna charta* of the salvation of sinners. The cross secures their crown and confirms their hope as an anchor both sure and steadfast forever.

“Great was the mystery! Truly great!
That hell’s designs should hell defeat;
But here eternal wisdom shined,
For Satan wrought what God designed.”

The fiends fulfilled the scriptures in condemning him; and though they did it unwittingly, it was what God’s hand and counsel before determined should be done. Acts 4:28; 13:27.

Then I have said that things in heaven, things on the earth, and things under the earth, all work for the good of God’s people. O the mysterious, heart-cheering work that has ever been going on, and will ever go on, in heaven for the people of God. Love has been beaming toward them forever. “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Jer.31:3. There the glorious Mediatorial Head of his people was set up from everlasting or ever the earth was. Prov.7:23. “Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2. There matchless grace that consummates the glorious work of salvation was given us in him before the world began, and,

“Grace all the work shall crown,
In everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”

There, too, absolute predestination decreed the adoption of the Adamic man into the family of God, putting him among the children, securing to him a glorious resurrection life, and there their names were indelibly written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. Rev.17:8. I firmly believe that even the devil’s wiles in the fall of man is worked by the unerring wisdom and power of God for the good of his people. If not, why did Paul say, “God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin?” Rom.6:17.

“Here Satan was nonplus’d in what he had done;
The fall wrought the channel where mercy should run,
In streams of salvation that never run dry,
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

And from the bud of time until now, the Lord has so ruled and overruled the works of men and devils as to make them conducive to the good of his people and the glory of his hallowed name; for the wrath of man shall praise him; the remainder of wrath he shall restrain. Psal.76:10.

Yes, all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. This call is the voice of God, and must be heard and obeyed. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” John 5:25. And the call must reach “even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Acts 2:39. It is a holy calling, and therefore a call to holiness. “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.” II Tim.1:9. The “purpose” is steadfast as the throne of God, and is an eternal purpose. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph.3:11. No frustrating this purpose. “The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” Isa.14:24. This purpose embraces every one of God’s people, this grace saves every one, and this call penetrates the ear of every one, and “they shall hear,” and “shall be saved.” “And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Acts 2:21; Rom.10:13. It is the work of God, and therefore done forever. “I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.” Eccl.3:14. Things under the earth must work for good to the Lord’s people. This expression, I conclude, will hold good if we descend to the regions of devils; for,

“If devils move, ‘tis by consent,
Of him who is omnipotent.”

I think it has been evinced that in the enemy’s first work on earth he out-done himself, and opened for the saints a never to be exhausted channel of mercy. If it were not so, then,

“How could sin forgiving grace,
‘Mong all the creatures find a place?
While all were good, no harm could be,
For mercy’s aid to misery.”

Then it must be admitted that the work of him and his cohorts, over-ruled and directed as it was by omnipotency and infinite wisdom, secured a “good hope through grace” for all that love God; and how is it possible that we could indulge that hope today, if Satan and his imps had not crucified the Lord of glory?

Brother McAdams, I have tried to comply with your request. Please examine what I have written closely, and compare it with the scriptures. If it accords therewith, and is of any benefit or comfort to you, I am amply paid. It seems to me a source of great pleasure to all that love God, that he does thus dispose of *all* things. May we all, then, be enabled

to meet our miseries with a becoming fortitude and submission to the divine and righteous will of him who worketh all things together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

“If thus the Lord doth work all things,
Together for our good,
How should we praise the King of kings,
And triumph in his blood.”

Your brother in hope of eternal life,

J. F. JOHNSON.

MOSES-AARON/CALEB-JOSHUA.

Clay Village, Ky., March 18, 1880.

MY DEAR BRETHREN BEEBE: - I have concluded to suggest a few remarks on the distinguished characters, Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, for publication in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and submit them to your disposal. From some cause, and I know not what the cause is, my mind has been made to contemplate upon those notable characters, and their various significant performances.

Moses was certainly a very conspicuous character in biblical history, and filled an important station in the Jewish nation. His name signifies, “Drawn out of the water.” Whether the name was designed to have any further significance than the simple fact that he was drawn out of the water, I cannot to a certainty say; but as he was a mediator, and the representative of the Jewish people, and as water is frequently used in the scriptures to signify trouble, tribulation, may it not have reference to his deliverance of that people from their sore bondage in Egypt, and, as their deliverance from bondage was doubtless typical of the deliverance of the people of God from a more terrible and degraded state of bondage by the spiritual Mediator, point to that circumstance also? Be that as it may, he was drawn out of the water, adopted as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, and learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians was mighty in words and in deeds, and made heir apparent to the throne of Egypt. But notwithstanding the glowing prospect of all the earthly pomp and worldly glory that lay before him, he “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” Heb.11:24-26. Noble emulation; but “he had respect to the

recompense of the reward.” In this and in many other respects he was no doubt a glowing type of Christ. He says, in Deut.18:15, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.” Thus did the Lord in this early period of time prefigure a more glorious work of a more glorious Mediator, that has delivered his people from a more terrible state of bondage by putting away their sin by the sacrifice of himself. The deliverance of the Hebrews from the yoke of bondage, the destruction of their enemies in the Red Sea, forty years in the wilderness, the crossing of the Jordan, and all the emblematic work in the promised land, were all directories to the pious Jews, pointing as a great cloud of testimonials to the great Anti-type, who was to “appear in the end of the [Jewish] world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

But one person was not enough to portray the coming and work of the great majestic Mediator, and therefore Aaron, with his flippant tongue, must accompany Moses as a teacher and priest, for Moses complained, saying, “I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.” This whole mission was fraught and filled up with many important typical events. Before his outset, Moses was shown the very singular circumstance of a flaming fire burning in the midst of a bush, and yet the bush was not consumed. Signifying, first, the severe suffering of his brethren in Egypt, and typically, the fiery ordeal through which the church of Christ should pass; and yet in all these fiery trials the Lord sustains, and makes a way for her escape, and therefore, like the bush, she should not be consumed. When the time arrived for the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, the Passover was secured by slaying and eating the paschal lamb, [lively type of the Lamb of God,] but it must be eaten with bitter herbs; after which the Lord miraculously delivers his people at the Red Sea, and the obedient waters were made to close upon and destroy the Egyptian hosts. They sang songs of triumph and passed on, but soon came to the waters of Marah [more bitterness,] but the Lord showed Moses a certain tree, which when thrown into the waters they became sweet. I suppose this tree was typical of the tree of life spoken of in Revelation 22:2. The Lord also rained bread from heaven, and sent quails in abundance to supply them with food while traversing the barren wilderness; and as for their clothing, their garments waxed not old, neither did their feet swell. It is very encouraging to look back and see the temporal deliverances, support, protection and forbearance exercised toward his national people, typifying in advance the goodness and plenitude vouchsafed to his spiritual people of the gospel dispensation.

Nor was Aaron the priest idle while these memorable events were going on. His burning incense and various oblations were offered at the waters of Marah, and throughout their journey in the wilderness, until they reached the borders of the promised land; but on Mount Sinai the might and majesty of the Lord were most conspicuously displayed. And what a majestic display! The bellowing peals of thunder, the flashing flood of lightning, the shrill, piercing sound of the trumpet! The pompous scene caused the people to tremble; “And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear

and quake.” Here the law was given, with all its sin avenging wrath, taking cognizance of every evil thought and deed; and like Moses, its eye never grew dim, nor its natural force abated. Moses performs one more notable work near here, at Mount Horeb, which was very significant. The people clamored for water, and Moses and Aaron gathered the people around a rock. How unlikely the prospect of obtaining water from the flinty rock. But Moses smites it twice, and the water gushes out, affording drink for the people plentifully. Beautiful emblem of the law-smitten Savior, and the subsequent flow of the “water of life.” “For the transgression of my people was he stricken.” Isa.53:8. And again, “Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” Zech.13:8.

But Aaron must be removed “by reason of death.” After fulfilling his official work of burning incense, his offerings and sacrifices, he has filled his mission as a type of the great High Priest and Apostle of our profession, and must die on Mount Hor, for he sinned at Meribah. He was therefore taken to the top of the mountain, divested of his pontifical robes, which were placed upon Eleazar his son, and dies there.

These two notable characters combined present very brilliant and significant types of the Savior. While Moses was lawgiver to a national community, Christ gave “the law of the spirit of life” to his spiritual family. While Aaron made offerings and sacrifices for the remembrance of the sins of a national people, Christ made one offering, one sacrifice, that “perfected forever them that are sanctified” as his peculiar people. But Moses has yet a great work to perform. Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, were to be subdued, and their country given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. These two tribes and a half were to have their possession on this side of Jordan, but it will be recollected that their men of war were to be armed and go over Jordan [leaving their wives and little ones behind,] to help in subduing the Canaanites. I have been asked why these two tribes and a half had their portion assigned to them this side of Jordan, and what did that circumstance signify? In answer to that question I will remark that, I think the land of Canaan, instead of being, as some suppose, a type of heaven, was typical of the gospel church or dispensation, and crossing the Jordan signified the passing out of the old dispensation into the new. If that be the case, then I suppose those two tribes and the half tribe represented God’s peculiar people among the Jews, that never reached or dwelt in the gospel dispensation. But as the men of war must go over and assist in subduing the enemies in the land of Canaan, so we need the prophets or former saints to assist us in putting to flight our enemies in this gospel day; and they are of signal benefit to us. How easy for us to prove not only the truth of the New Testament by the Old, but other things often transpire that require the prophetic writers to sustain us, so that they compass us about with a great cloud of witnesses. As to Moses, after subduing the kings Sihon and Og, and the appointment of their possessions to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, his work seems to be drawing to a close, and he says to the Lord, “I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan.” Deut.3:5. But the Lord refused to let him cross over Jordan, and commanded him to get

up into the top of Pisgah, and see the land with his eyes, and said, “Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.” He was to charge Joshua to go over, and strengthen him, and was to die on the top of Pisgah; and there he did die, and the Lord buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, “and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day,” though work-mongers have been trying to find and dig him up ever since. Moses [the law or works] can bring no one into the kingdom of heaven.

Caleb and Joshua: The name Caleb signifies, “a dog, a cow, or a basket.” I cannot tell why this name was given to him, or what it was to signify. He and Joshua were the only two adults that were redeemed and came from the land of bondage that were to cross over Jordan and possess the promised land. See Numbers 14:29,30. The name *Joshua* signifies “Savior,” and it is sufficiently evident that he typified the Savior of sinners. He and Caleb were sent over in the first place to spy out the land, and brought a good report; while others reported adversely to them, and gave account of great danger, on account of which they were prohibited from passing over Jordan, while Caleb and Joshua were ordered to pass over and possess the land. As they were the only two that were suffered to cross over into the promised land, and as John the Baptist and Christ were the only two that passed out of the old into the new dispensation, I think that Caleb and Joshua were lively types of John the Baptist and Christ, for they were the only two that passed out of the old into the new dispensation. For “the law and the prophets were until John” – extended no further, but stopped there; therefore none could come out of the old, for it did not exist. John the Baptist, like Caleb, not only saw, but entered into the new dispensation, gathered its fruits, and exhibited them to others.

How wonderful the prescience and work of God! He not only foresaw and ordained the signal blessings of the glorious gospel of the Son of God, but so clearly developed them to the ancient patriarchs and prophets as to leave them and us without the shadow of a doubt as to their fulfillment. What indubitable evidence of his wisdom, power, veracity, faithfulness and goodness in all that he has ordained and in all his works for the good of his people, in the distribution of both his temporal and spiritual blessings to them. “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, with the patriarchs and other prophets and priests, were prominent precursors of the coming Messiah and the fulfillment of his predictions, as well as the beneficence of his nature, in thus providing for and supplying with all the plenitude of his bounty everything that we need either for time or eternity. In the execution of his designs and the fulfillment of his promises, what incontestable testimonials we have, what a firm basis to rest upon. No casual impingings, no conditional circumstances upon which a doubt can reasonably rest. In all these cases Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua point unerringly to the Savior of us poor sinners; and how should we rejoice to see those typical characters so completely filling their stations, and the work of those hieroglyphical ones so completely fulfilled in our day. It is really

heart-cheering to see that the Lord in those early ages should thus raise up such faithful emblematical personages, and so direct their performances as to tell in all succeeding ages and in unmistakable language – show forth by undeniable performances the great and glorious advent and work of the Savior of sinners in so lucid a light as to dispel every fear of a failure as to the complete consummation of his eternal designs.

As ever, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

TITUS 3:5 – THE WASHING OF REGENERATION.

Clay Village, Ky., July 1, 1880.

DEAR BRETHREN BEEBE: - In looking over No.12, present volume of the SIGNS, I see a request from brother T.D. Clarkson, of California, which reads as follows:

“Will Elder J.F. Johnson please give his views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on Titus 3:5, especially what was saved by the washing of regeneration, and what was renewed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost? Please bring this matter within a strong and clear light.”

I cannot assure my brother that I will bring the matter within a “strong and clear light,” for that depends altogether whether the Lord will afford me such a light; but I will do the best I can in compliance with his request.

The text reads, “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.” “Not by works of righteousness.” This short sentence settles at once a damper and a deadly veto on the whole theory of the worldly or work-mongrel religion of the day. Not a society in the country, outside of the Old School Baptists, but must have salvation by works, or by endeavoring to mix works and grace together to accomplish that salvation. But it is “not by works,” “not of works,” “not according to works” “of righteousness which we have done,” and surely none will contend that it is by works of unrighteousness which we have done; therefore it is not by works of any kind that we have done or can do.

Let us next consider the significance of this word *mercy*. I think the word has not precisely a synonym in our language. Grace, perhaps, comes nearest to it. Mercy signifies, first, relief to sufferers, pity, compassion, pardon, &c., but to objects entirely unworthy of these blessings. It is peculiarly adapted to the condition of the Lord’s people when suffering under a sense of their sinfulness and deserved punishment for their sins; and the relief appears truly great when Christ makes known to them the riches of his

mercy in their salvation; and though they feel very unworthy, the joy is unspeakable and full of glory. It is according to such mercy he *saved* us. Mark you, it is in the past tense that the apostle speaks of this wonderful and all-glorious work having been done; not what is doing now, nor will be done hereafter. Isaiah said [45:17,] “Israel shall be saved in the Lord;” and the angel said [Matt.1:21,] “He shall save his people from their sins.” But when the immaculate Lamb of God “was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification,” the momentous work was finished; hence Paul says, “*saved* us by the washing of regeneration,” “who *hath saved* us, and called us,” &c.

“By the washing of regeneration.” To wash is to cleanse by ablution from stain, pollution, filth, &c.; to remove putrescence or corruption of all kinds. Salvation from all this was fully consummated when “Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.” That great and marvelous work constituted “the regeneration” of all that ever were or ever will be regenerated. This idea may be scoffed, ridiculed and contradicted, but it is irrefutable. The Lord’s people have been receiving manifestations of this regeneration all along since it was completed, but the manifestation of a thing is not the thing itself. It is incontrovertible, therefore, that it was the polluted *sinner* that was saved by the washing of regeneration. Brother C. wants this matter put in a “strong and clear light.” Well, “He [Christ] died for our sins.” “His blood cleanseth us from all sin.” “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to God and his Father; unto him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” I know not how to put the matter in a stronger or clearer light than these holy men of God have done. It was the defiled sinner that was saved by the washing of regeneration, for none other needed ablution.

Brother C. desires me to say also what was renewed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. To renew is not to give life, but to sustain, perpetuate and uphold life where that life exists. That life ever existed in the new man; but as he is constantly exposed to a cruel warfare, he as constantly needs this renewal. The outward man decayeth, but the inward man is renewed day by day. The scriptures do not tell me anything about the renewing of the outward man. The din of war is continually raging between the flesh and the spirit, or between the old and new man, and while the battle is raging so vehemently, it is a consoling reflection that the victory of the new man is inevitable; for while one is daily decaying, the other is daily renewed, and there is no doubt as to which will triumph.

Let us heed the admonition of the apostle [Eph.4:22,] and put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, “and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” When that signal and glorious victory which was won on Calvary shall have been consummated in all the saints, and realized by all, with what emotions of joy will we hail the happy event, with what ecstatic joy, what songs of deliverance, what heart-

thrilling melody will we chant the high praises of the great Deliverer, “and crown him Lord of all.”

I will close this brief and incoherent communication, submit it to the will of the editors of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and if published, to the scriptural scrutiny of brother Clarkson and others, and remain, as ever,

J. F. JOHNSON.

THE DEATH OF ADAM.

Clay Village, Ky., 1880.

“Will Elder J.F. Johnson of Ky., give his views on I Cor.15:22? Did Adam die a spiritual death or not? If he did not, how are we spiritually dead? The question has been asked us, and we are bothered over it. By answering this you will confer a favor on the least of the little ones, if one at all.

G.W. Russell.

BRETHREN BEEBE: - The above is a request from brother Russell, of Missouri. We do not suppose that the death here spoken of is a spiritual death, nor do we suppose that a spiritual death literally can possibly occur. Said Christ, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” And again, “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Let it be noted here that *die* in the text is used in the present tense; it is not *died*, in the past, or we would all have been dead according to the wording of the text before now. Neither is it a spiritual death that we die, for we read of no such death in the scriptures. It is simply the corporeal death of *Adam* that is spoken of in the text; and when I say Adam, I mean all his posterity with him; for all the nations that dwell on all the face of the earth are simply Adam multiplied. No addition to him since his first creation; so that it is in the Adam nature, or in Adam, we die, and continue to die. My brother asks the question, “Did Adam die a spiritual death or not?” I answer unhesitatingly, No. How could he lose a life that he did not have? His life was a natural, not a spiritual life. See the connection. “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” – verses 46-49. The question is further propounded, “If he did not, how are we spiritually dead?” I do not find that the scriptures say anything about our being spiritually dead, nor do I think that the expression is a tenable one. Death is a destitution of life; and when we are destitute of it we are dead, so far as that life is

concerned. It is true that we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins; but how can that be spiritual death if we never had spiritual life? The questions may arise, How then are we dead? When did the death occur? To answer these interrogatories, refer to Romans 5:12. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Walker describes death theologically to be "separation, or alienation from God; a being under the dominion of sin, and destitute of divine life; called [he says] spiritual death." All this took place when man first sinned; for God drove him out of the garden of Eden and placed an impenetrable barrier there to prevent his re-entering it; and therefore he was separated from God, [which separation is death] alienated, became a wanderer from him, and has by nature ever since then been an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." There then was separation from God while in sin, or in other words, "dead in sin." This is neither a spiritual nor a corporeal death, but a separation from God, and that separation [or death] occurred on the very day when he had eaten of the tree which the Lord commanded him not to eat of; for God said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He did eat of the forbidden tree, and that day did die. Some who try to make it appear that this had reference to a corporeal death, quote II Peter 3:8, "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," but that text has no reference to the subject under consideration. Again; others say that the forbidden fruit was an apple. Now I do not suppose that it was an apple, peach, pear, apricot, cherry, plum, nor anything of the kind. I think that it was *lust* of some kind, whether it was to be as gods or some other kind. We are told that "lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." It appears to me, that lust, an inordinate desire, was the first crime and sin, a disobedient act, a consequent one, that sealed our death in sin. Thus it is in Adam, or in our Adamic nature, that we all continue to die.

"Even so, in Christ, shall all be made alive." In this expression the two paternal heads of the two generations or families [natural and spiritual] are brought to view; and as in the first all that are born of him die, even so, in the second, all that were given him of the Father shall be [in the future] made alive.

I think that neither the death nor the making alive has any reference to the spiritual family, for they never die, and of course cannot be *made* alive; for they have ever lived, and will live forever. But when death shall have done its work on those who were given him [Christ] of his Father, they shall all be made alive in Christ; for it is said in Isaiah 26:19, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake; and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." And again, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." O glorious hope of an all-glorious resurrection! "And we shall live in his sight;" yea, in his presence; in

whose presence is fullness of joy; at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore. And what a life! Not one bruised and blackened, polluted and defiled with sin, as is our mortal life here, but a blissful life of immortality, eternal life, un-contaminated, therefore undying. “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

“But every man in his own order.” In whose own order? I suppose that it is in Christ’s own order that all his people will be raised; precisely in the order, manner or likeness in which he was raised; for then we shall see him as he is and be like him. It is said in Acts 26:23, “That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead,” &c. And in Col.1:18, “And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” Of course, then, as he is the first born from the dead, his followers, as they are to be like him, will be born in the same order or likeness.

“Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Here allusion is had to the offerings of the first fruits under the Mosaic dispensation, which were typical symbols, pointing to Christ as the first fruits of them that slept. Those fruits were specimens of the following portion of the crop. “If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.” Of course, then, as before observed, “We shall see him as he is, and be like him,” raised in the same order. Yes, “afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Momentous inquiry!

“Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?”

Have we a comfortable evidence that we are his? What a cheering, joyful, exhilarating anticipation! The Lord will come to resurrect the purchase of his precious blood, and receive them to their blissful home. Majestic, awful, sublime appearing, when the “Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Submitted first to my dear brethren editors, and then, if published, to brother Russell and others who may think it worth their notice.

May I still be permitted to remain a brother in hope,

J. F. JOHNSON.

GEN.3:15 – TWO SEEDS.

Clay Village, Ky., Dec.20, 1880.

DEAR BRETHREN EDITORS OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES: - In the seventeenth number of the present volume of the SIGNS, I see some requests for my views on several passages of scripture, some of which I do not feel capacitated to write on at present. The first is from brother John K. Johnson, of Missouri, and as I have heretofore written and published my views on Rev.12:8, in my writings, I refer him to what is there written.

Then comes the request of U.J. Bell, saying, “Will brother J.F. Johnson, of Kentucky, give his views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, on Gen.3:15, especially on the seeds, and oblige one that desires a spiritual understanding of the scriptures.” Incapable as I feel of instructing brother Bell, or others, I will try briefly to comply with his request.

The Lord is here speaking of some of the dreadful consequences that were to succeed the terrible fall of our primeval parents. That direful fall made it necessary for the exhibition of the glory of God, and the deliverance of his people, that a decisive conflict should occur between Christ, the seed of the woman according to the flesh, and the subtle serpent who had beguiled our original parentage.

In this conflict Christ was ordained to be delivered, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, into the hands of the serpent and his cohorts, to be crucified and slain. It ordained that he should save his people from their sins. Terrible fall! To bring upon the immaculate Son of God this mournful event. Poor man! Taken captive by the devil, led by a most implacable enemy, bound by the manacles of sin, and even delighted with the chains that bind him. But,

“Here Satan was nonplus’d in what he had done;
The fall wrought the channel where mercy should run,
In streams of salvation that never run dry,
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

With wonder and amazement we look back beyond the verge of time at the infinite counsel and prescience of God, in which it was decreed that the beloved Son of God should be brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He had done no violence, no deceit was found in his lips. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him,” to put him to grief.

But in this tragical transaction the serpent and his seed acts a conspicuous part. By his subtilty he has plunged the entire race of man into a dismal vortex, and down, down they

are going to inevitable ruin, where all must ultimately land, unless rescued by the arm of omnipotence. Could we see no further than this doleful scene, it seems that the serpent had achieved a final victory over the whole family of poor imbecile man; but it opens the way for a final and decisive combat between the two seeds; and at a specific time the two belligerents must meet and decide this momentous contest. But my brother wants my views especially on the seeds. The seed here, as in many other places, has reference to posterity, or lineal, hereditary descent. The seed of the woman here, doubtless, refers to Christ, who is to bruise the serpent's head, but we identify with him all the election of grace, all that were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, all that are born of that incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth forever. "For a seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Ps.22:30.

The prophet announces the coming of this seed that was to bruise the serpent's head in the following language. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isa.7:14.

So far as the seed of Satan is concerned, we are not to understand that he has procreative or generating power to produce flesh and blood. When the Savior said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil," John 8:44, he had reference to him as the father of the wicked spirit that prompted them to act as they did; we might say their wicked spiritual father, as God is the father of his spiritual children.

That wicked spiritual seed of the serpent is called "the seed of the wicked," Psalm 30:28, "seed of evil doers," "children that are corrupters," Isa.1:4, while the Lord's spiritual children are called "the seed of the righteous," Prov.15:21, "the holy seed," Isa.6:13, "a godly seed," [*seed of God* – in the margin] Mal.2:15.

But the Lord said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," and that malevolence has existed between the two seeds ever since, and still remains in the same state of opposition that has ever characterized it. "It [the woman's seed] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Here the sanguinary contest, the bloody drama that must seal the destiny of myriads was announced. Like a long quarrel or irreconcilable controversy the strife went on until it finally came to blows. But what a combat! Indeed it seemed like a bloody assault of the one part, without any resistance on the other. The seed of the woman is dragged as a prisoner at the bar, but makes no resistance. Behold the meek and passive Son of God! Buffeted, spit upon, clothed with a mock robe and derisively hailed king of the Jews, crowned with piercing thorns, nailed to the cross – put to death. What was Satan and his cohorts aiming at here? To kill the Son, the Heir, and seize upon the inheritance. But they are engaged in a conflict with omnipotence. God's power and wisdom are making their wrath to praise him, to make that wrath work for the good, the salvation of his people and the glory of his name. What! Is Satan working for the salvation of God's people? He certainly did in that case, though unconsciously, work to accomplish that very end. He and his allies put the Savior to death, and that death, though they slew him with "wicked

hands,” a wicked design, and were therefore inexcusable; yet that death completed the eternal redemption of his people, their everlasting and full salvation from their sins. Thus the serpent bruised his heel. But why was it said, Bruised his heel? The heel is the lower and hinder part of the body. The Mediator, or man Christ Jesus existed ere time began; but his body followed; was “made of a woman, made under the law.” Hence it was the afterpart, and he was put to death in the flesh. Therefore, it was his body, after part, or heel that was bruised.

But he was to bruise the serpent’s head. His highest aspirations were to be contravened or defeated. Hence the apostle said, “Forasmuch 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.” Heb.2:14,15. Thus the serpent’s highest calculations and most sanguine anticipations were destroyed, and wonderful to think, it was done by “*death*.”

“But see the wonders of his power;
He triumphs in the dying hour;
And though by Satan’s rage he fell,
He dashed the rising hopes of hell.”

But does not the serpent still continue to bruise the heel of the woman’s seed? His people here on the earth constitute the lower and latter, or hinder part of his body, the church, and how often we feel with sore dismay his daily bruises.

“But let not all this terrify,
Pursue the narrow path;
Look to the Lord with steadfast eye,
And fight the fight of faith.”

Jesus has bruised, and will continue to bruise the head of the serpent. In the first open conflict he bruised his head – destroyed his works on Calvary, made him the unconscious agent of pulling down his own diabolical kingdom, and will continue to bruise until he, upon whom the spirit of the Lord is, shall be pleased “to set at liberty them that are bruised,” as the apostle has said to his brethren, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” Rom.16:20. Thus a conflict was promulgated in the bud of time between two contending powers, one almighty, the other permissive; for when the serpent was permitted to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman on Calvary it was in exact accordance with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. These two contending powers have been engaged in deadly conflict ever since its annunciation, and these powers will continue to be active belligerents as long as time endures. The religion

of Christ and the religion of anti-christ both receive impetus from those powers, and the warfare will continue to rage until one is finally and effectually subdued. But it is a conflict of no doubtful eventuality, no doubtful termination.

One of the agents that gives impetus to this conflict is omnipotent, the other only permissively. The struggle that the child of God is daily engaged in is the result of the working of these agencies. The spirit that works in the children of disobedience operates in the flesh and its opposite in the spirit, in consequence of which the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. But from the time of the ringing of the tocsin of war until now, the battle has been raging; but the seed of the woman has long achieved a signal victory, and has it in reserve for each of his followers, and each one may eventually say, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory."

Yours as ever,

J. F. JOHNSON.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

Clay Village, Ky., March 11, 1881.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - After some solemn reflections this morning, I have concluded to pen some desultory reminiscences of my past life in connection with others near my own age, including yourself. In the obituary department of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, what a large proportion of the notices inform us of the demise of brethren and sisters, near, and even over our ages. It reminds me that ere long, we too, "must go the way of all the earth." I think of the companions of my youth, and ask myself, Where are they? Gone, gone never to return. Then I think with Newton,

"Former friends, O how I've sought them!
Just to cheer my drooping mind;
But they're gone like leaves of autumn,
Driven before a dreary wind."

Does it not seem strange to us when we look from our eighty-first year, and consider the speedy flight of time, and yet how many stirring events are crowded into that little space? When I retrospect my former life, and remember the seeming hair-breadth escapes of that life I have witnessed, it appears to be a miracle that I yet live, and can attribute it to but one thing, and that is, it pleased the Lord to preserve me. I was reckless as to danger, although I had kind and pious parents to watch over and warn me; and although I

was considered rather a moral boy, never was considered profane, either in my conduct or conversation, yet I can look back and say with the poet, Watts,

“Here on my heart the burden lies,
And past offenses pain my eyes.”

My first twenty-seven years were wholly spent in vanity. After that period I began to fear that all was not right with me; and then, if all the powers of my vile nature could have dethroned grace, it would have been done; but thanks be to God, grace reigns, and will and must reign, and I humbly hope did reign in my case. But before I was through with my awfully increasing distress, I was anxious enough to implore relief from any source.

Before this I had known nothing about the exceeding sinfulness of sin, nothing about grace, nothing about religion of any kind except such as I could obtain by my own works. But such a sinner as I then saw myself to be was an awful, awful sight indeed. There I lay one night after a long struggle to make myself better, a miserable, condemned sinner, and justly condemned too, when the never to be forgotten words were spoken to my heart, [not to my natural ears] “The Master is come and calleth for thee,” thrilled through me, and all my trouble was gone. And afterward, when I saw plainly, [not with my natural eyes] the lovely face of my dear Redeemer, my joy, if possible, surpassed what my grief had been. The world and all its vanities were nothing to me then. I little expected then to encounter the doubts and fears, the tribulation and distress that awaited me. But those doubts and fears soon began to annoy me, and have still continued to harass me to this day. But sorer trouble awaited me. It was when it was impressed upon my mind to preach the gospel. I thought I knew as well as I could know anything that I never could do it, and the awful thought of such a sinner attempting so sacred a work, was it not blasphemy? And the wonder was, why could I not banish it from my mind and trouble myself no more about it? But the terrible words, “Keep not silence,” Isa.62:6, harassed me continually. But after the church called on me to exercise my gift [if I had any,] and I made some attempts to do so, these troubles gradually wore off. The next trouble was the division of the church on the subject of “three persons in the Godhead.” Myself and a few others could not conscientiously indorse the sentiment. There had previously been much controversy on that subject in the churches and associations in Ohio and Indiana, and they had finally settled on an agreement that it should not be a test of fellowship. Finally, a candidate presented himself to the church for reception, and the pastor of the church asked him if he indorsed that article. He replied that he could not fully indorse the idea that he understood those words to convey. He was then told that he could not be received into that church. I then arose and observed that that article had caused much contention among the Baptists, and they finally agreed that it should not be a bar of fellowship; that Lebanon church had through her pastor made it a bar; and if it must remain one, put it up

against me, for I did not believe it. It raised a terrible storm over me, which continued to rage for about eighteen months. At first, I suppose three-fourths of the church were opposed to me, mostly relatives or connections of the pastor. Finally, at the time of the division, out of over eighty members, twenty-two went with them, and the others remained with us. There were then mutual exclusions on both sides; but in a few months they came back, made acknowledgements, and were received, not very cordially, however, by myself and some others. Not long afterward the *means* controversy came up, and the same ones, with one exception only, went off with that error. The truth of the case was, they found themselves out in the cold alone in the first instance, in the second they had company to suit them.

Since those divisions I have lived in peace with the churches where I have labored without an exception. Have had the pastoral care of thirteen or fourteen churches in Indiana, New York and Kentucky, but have always made a rule never to accept a call from any church if I knew of one member in good standing in the church that objected to me as pastor. Of four churches which I have served for from seventeen to twenty years, if there ever has been or is now a solitary member opposed to me as the pastor I have never known it, but attribute it more to the forbearance of the brethren than to my own merits. I have always thought too, that they placed a higher estimate upon my poor labors than they deserved.

How thankful I should be, for the sweet union and fellowship I have enjoyed with the dear saints, not only about home, but where I have so extensively traveled; for I suppose that since the beginning of my ministerial labors I have traveled a distance that would reach more than three times around the globe.

Notwithstanding the trials and tribulations I have passed through, I can say with the apostle, "We are bound to give thanks always 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.2:14. What could I enjoy in this sin-polluted world if deprived of the companionship and social worship with the saints.

I suppose it has been forty years or more, brother Beebe, since I became first acquainted with you, and it has been truly a very pleasant, and to me, a very profitable acquaintance. I believe there is but eighteen days' difference in our ages. I very well recollect the first conversation we had together; each one of us had four sons and three daughters. Now, each of us have a son that is a preacher of the Old School Baptist order. So far as I have discovered there has been a happy oneness in our religious sentiments. I hope we have learned at the same old school and under the same Teacher. We have traveled and labored considerably together, and that has added much to the interest that I have felt in the acquaintance, for I have learned much thereby, and also have received much comfort as well as instruction. How many thousands of the dear saints have been comforted, encouraged and instructed by your editorials and through the correspondence

of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Your paper has been of incalculable value to the Old School or Primitive Baptists. Your arduous labors have no doubt bound you to thousands. I know it has been thus with me, and the unanimity that has seemed to exist between you and me makes me hope that we are bound together with inseverable ties. What can separate us?

You have been assailed too, by some very small fault-finders. But what has that amounted to? Simply to bind you closer to your brethren. Some of them seemed to try to make a considerable show, and raised a fog or dust, and perhaps thought they did. I have heard of a bull that was pawing up the dust at a wonderful rate, while a fly that sat on his horn was crying out, "See what a dust I have raised." May God sustain you, my dear brother, as long as it is his will that you should feed and instruct his children; and when he bids you to lay your armor by, may he enable you to say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I wish to say a few words to the patrons of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Brethren, I fear we are not doing as much to sustain our family paper as we should. There are many indigent brethren and sisters to whom brother Beebe sends the paper gratis. Might not many of us do the same? When divided among many it would be but a small matter to each one. I pay for two such brethren besides my own subscription, and perhaps that is not as much as I should do. Now, dear brethren, let me entreat you to send on remittances for one or two, or more of your poor brethren if you are able to do so; it may aid brother Beebe very much, and not be perceptibly felt among so many. Remember what your Savior says: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

It has been my high privilege, too, to have had the acquaintance of my venerable and very highly esteemed brother T.P. Dudley for more than the fourth of a century. I think I can safely say that I have never discovered a fault in him, and that is saying a good deal. His ability, amiableness, brotherly kindness and christian deportment have endeared him to many, very many. It would be hard to find a more companionable brother anywhere. Many of his brethren and friends who have heard of his almost hopeless condition as to health, will be glad to learn the word I had from him last was he was about well. I think he will be eighty-nine years old on the last of May next, and an able and faithful minister of the New Testament for more than sixty years.

I believe that the two venerable brethren that I have named, are the only gospel ministers with whom I have been so long and intimately acquainted that are now living; and when I consider the affliction through which we have been called to pass, and the tender, parental care exercised toward us, it makes them feel very near and dear to me; though it does not lessen the esteem I have for my younger brethren in the ministry, nor

the appreciation of their labors. In years that are gone by I have been acquainted with many brethren in the ministry that were near my age, but where are they now?

“As the annual frosts are cropping,
Leaves and tendrils from the trees,
So my friends are yearly dropping,
Through old age and dire disease.”

But again,

“Where are those we counted leaders?
Filled with love, and zeal, and truth?
Old professors tall as cedars,
Bright examples for our youth.”

My dear aged brethren, let us patiently abide our time while the flickering taper of our mortal lamp continues faintly to glow; and when it shall have gone out, may we fall asleep in the arms of Jesus, awake in his likeness, and so ever be with the Lord.

J. F. JOHNSON.

THE JUDGMENT.

Clay Village, Ky., July, 1881.

DEAR BRETHREN BEEBE: - Brother J.F. Huckaby, of Dallas, Miss., desires me to write on the idea of a general judgment, and critical examination, that Arminians say is to occur after the end of this world; that there will be a special trial and close investigation of the deeds done in the body here, and many witnesses called up to testify to the conduct of each individual person; as though the Lord did not know what was going on in the world without calling on men to instruct him. I recollect once hearing a Methodist preacher paraphrase on the text in Heb.9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment,” &c. He pointed out a critical trial that was to take place “after death.” As he quoted the text, [perhaps himself to be one of the witnesses,] “but,” he observed, “some don’t believe in such a judgment as this; but the scriptures are too plain on this point to be denied.” Then he quoted, “He shall convince the world of sin, of

righteousness, and of judgment *to come*,” emphasizing heavily on *to come*, [his own interpolation] when, had he quoted on, he might have seen that the judgment had already come. “Of sin, because of unbelief; of unrighteousness, because I go to my Father,” &c.; “of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” Now, by reference to the scriptures, we may form an opinion about this judgment. “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.” Rom.5:16. And again, “Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation,” &c. It appears from these texts that the judgment is already passed. “As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this [this appointment] the judgment,” &c., so that after this appointment unto men once to die, then the judgment immediately followed. Brother Huckaby refers me to the text in II Cor.5:11, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body,” [of Christ, which is the church.] I therefore conclude it is the church we are to appear before to give this account, for there it is that a “King shall reign in righteousness, and princes [the apostles] shall rule in judgment.” His irreversible decree has settled, and settled forever, the happy destiny of his people, and the rest were “of old foreordained to this condemnation.” Jude 4. The Lord will not find it necessary to assemble the nations together after this world, having already passed judgment upon all men. No, his fiat is fixed, his decision irrevocable. Paul says, “Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” No time for litigation here. Instead of being subjected to a future trial or judgment, “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” The Lord is not like poor, imbecile man; for “there are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” Prov.19:21. No new devices or new combination of new ideas. Hear what he says: “I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” Isa.46:10.

Now, my dear brother, if our sins were laid on Jesus, and he bare them on the cross, they went to judgment then and there, and were buried in oblivion forever. No arraying them against us in judgment after the affairs of this world are wound up; for then to us the welcome trumpet shall sound, and we shall be raised incorruptible.

Your friend and brother most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

THIS ENDS THE WRITINGS OF J.F. JOHNSON.

Obituary Notice

G. BEEBE'S SONS - DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST: By request of our deeply afflicted sister Johnson, I write, briefly, to inform the brethren and readers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, of the death of Elder J.F. Johnson. He passed one week ago today, Tuesday, Sept. 27, 1881, in his 81st year. Though conscious of the near approach of the time of his departure, he had but little to say, seemingly wrapped in his own silent meditations. His history as an able minister and writer is too well and widely known for me to even attempt to say anything to his memory in this brief notice. He ever had a word of cheer and comfort to Zion's afflicted, and like your dear father, never turned his back to the enemies of truth. But he is gone, gone to his eternal rest, no more to mix and mingle in the conflict of life. We miss him, we mourn his departure, but we should remember that it is the Captain of Israel's hosts that has called him from the field of carnage and strife, and now with a crown of glory on his head, the folds of his banner sweep open to the gentle breeze of heaven, and on it written in letters of living light is VICTORY over the last enemy. May God in his mercy comfort his dear wife and children, together with the churches he has served so long and faithfully, and may he give the spirit of reconciliation to his will, and a desire;

“For faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink,
Of any earthly foe.

That will not murmur or complain,
Beneath the chastening rod;
But in the hour of grief and pain,
Will lean upon its God.

A faith that shines more bright and clear,
When tempests rage about,
That, when in danger, knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss,
Of an eternal home."

With much love, I am your brother in tribulation and hope,

J. TAYLOR MOORE.
Georgetown, KY., OCT. 4, 1881.