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OF
EDITORIAL ARTICLES

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“SIGNS OF THE TIMES,”
EMBRACING A PERIOD OF FORTY-NINE YEARS

1832-1881

IN WHICH IS REFLECTED THE
DOCTRINE AND ORDER OF THE
OLD SCHOOL, OR PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS.

WRITTEN BY
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INTRODUCTORY.

Volume Five embraces most of the war years. Our beloved nation was rent apart, North against South. Every facet of life was affected, and the churches of the Old Order of Baptists felt the division keenly.

What was once a happy family of believers became separated. Transportation to the South ground to a standstill, and mail service, which once was the major line of communication, was halted between the Confederacy and the Union.

Elder Beebe gave serious consideration to discontinuing publication of the “Signs of the Times” and, but for generous support from the brethren in the North, would have done so. There were several thousand subscribers in the South that no longer could help maintain the work, yet the Lord provided.

The reader will find a few references to the turmoil affecting the Baptists and the nation in the articles of this Volume, but Beebe wisely avoided placing blame, except for pointing out the vile conduct of the Northern and Southern clergy in fanning the flames of discord.

Beebe’s departure from his usual conservatism to dabble in prophetic speculation is interesting, but for the most part harmless. Frequent defenses of associations is understandable in light of the unrest among the churches.

Despite the stresses of the time, the Lord appeared to signally bless this eminent servant to continue to feed the troubled flock by word and pen. May it be His pleasure to do so again today with the publication of this Volume.

The Publishes

REMARKS ON FASTING

Dear Brother Beebe: Times, religiously, are quite as flattering as when I last wrote. Since my last letter was written, I have baptized some fifteen or more. How long these happy seasons of refreshings from the presence of the Lord will continue I cannot tell; for at present the public mind, and also the mind of the church, is much disturbed by the distracted condition of our once happy country. I herewith send you a copy of a resolution passed by the Bethlehem Church of Regular Baptists, at her regular meeting of business, Saturday, May 4, 1861:

Resolved: That this church order and ordain that Thursday, the 6th day of June, 1861, be observed and kept as a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer to Almighty God, for the interposition of his wisdom and power in the settling of our national difficulties, and that he would restore peace to us as a nation and a church. And further

Resolved: That a copy of this resolution be sent to all the churches of our Association, that they may join with us on that day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, for the purpose above stated.

Joel Hume, Moderator.

William Williams, Clerk.

I believe all our churches will respond to the call, and not only ours, but all the churches of our sister Associations, who may hear what the above church has done. Please publish this at the earliest possible day.

Your affectionate brother,
James Strickland.

Remarks on Fasting – We have complied with the request of our esteemed brother Elder James Strickland in publishing the order and appointment of the Bethlehem church of Regular Baptists, to observe a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, for the interposition of divine power to save our beloved country from the calamity of civil and fratricidal war and anarchy. While we most heartily approve their object, and would most devoutly join them in humble supplication to God to allay the fury of the belligerent elements, and roll back the cloud of strife, and extend the peaceful spirit of the gospel far abroad, we cannot easily suppress our doubts in regard to the manner proposed. The instructions of our Lord on the subject forbids us to fast after the manner of those who make a public display of their fastings and prayers. These are the words of instruction to the disciples of Jesus on the subject: “Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which is in secret shall reward thee openly.” Our fasting should be a secret matter with our God. But if we pass resolutions appointing a day for fasting, and publicly announce our appointments, wherein do we in those particulars differ from the hypocrites? We do not mean to be understood as doubting the purity of the motives of our brethren. In their object there is a very wide difference; but in manner, in making their fasting a public matter, do they not transgress the instructions of their Lord? We cannot set a day in the future when we will be humble, devotional, prayerful and abstineous. But when immediately under the humbling power of the Spirit, then, and only then, can we abase ourselves before God, while our outward appearance must not betray to men that we are fasting. The New School Baptist State convention in Georgia has recently presented to the Congress of the seceded States a set of resolutions, in which they pledge themselves to sustain the war, and request the Congress to appoint a fast day; while nearly all the pulpits in the Northern States are equally

bent on war and public fasting. In all candor we ask, do not those ostentatious religious flourishes justify the words of the Lord, by Isaiah 58:4, “Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness,” etc.?

It is truly a time when christians should fast and pray and cry mightily unto the Lord to visit our guilty land in mercy, pardon our sins, blot out our transgressions and spare us in mercy from the consequences of our own madness and folly. And we do hope that not only the Bethlehem church of Illinois, and those in her vicinity, but every branch of the church of God in our country, both North and South, may pray without ceasing for a return of peace and prosperity to all parts of our country, and for a general outpouring of his Spirit, and revival of his cause. But in our humiliation and devotion let us observe the instructions of our Lord, and avoid ostentation and parade.

Middletown, N. Y.,

June 15, 1861.

GENESIS 4:10; JUDE 11

“The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground!” – Gen. 4:10.

“Wo unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain!” – Jude 11.

It is worthy of remark that the first blood that was ever shed by man resulted from a religious controversy, in which the murderer claimed a right of dominion over the conscience and faith of his innocent and unoffending brother – and the first death that ever occurred in the human family was that of righteous Abel, whom Cain slew, because his religion did not suit the creed of the murderer. But since that dark and damning crime was perpetrated, what rivers of blood have crimsoned the earth, and by far the greater portion of that blood has been shed by those who, like Cain, have stained their guilty hands in their wicked cruelties in coercing the consciences of their fellow men. Including the Pharisees and Scribes of eighteen hundred years ago with the murderers of all preceding ages, our Lord pronounced them a generation of vipers, and demanded of them which of the prophets their fathers had not stoned; or otherwise put to death; and charged all the righteous blood shed from the blood of Abel, to that of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar, upon that generation. Shocking as the disclosures of blood had been, before the advent of the Prince of Peace, the crimson tide has deepened and over-flowed its banks in the subsequent ages of the history of the world. The sun grew pale and ceased to illuminate the world for three hours, when guilty hands had nailed to the cross the guiltless, spotless Son of God. The apostles of the crucified Redeemer, and very many of the primitive saints, were also slaughtered by the same mad and blood-thirsty persecutors of the servants of the Most High God. And all this blood was shed by those who made the loudest professions of piety, and who were by the world accredited as the most religious class of men upon the face of the earth. But all the rivers of blood which that malignant generation had shed – could not satiate their murderous disposition. In scarlet lines of history we trace the carnage, desolating whole nations; and by racks, tortures, gibbets, flames, through the dark ages, which records the martyrdom of slaughtered millions, for their alleged lack of orthodoxy to some humanly dictated religious creed. Nor has the sea of blood ceased to swell its tide since the pagan and papal powers have been measurably restrained by

what has been greeted as the radiance of a brighter day. Reformers who have protested against the cruel deeds of their fathers have followed in their track, to the full extent of their power; although restrained by the providence of God, they have become weary of restraints, and in the midst of their boast of progression in civilization, science, and divinity, have never lost their thirst for blood. In the early settlement of our country, the Puritans who professed to have fled from persecution in the old country, but in reality had left the old country because they had lost the power there to persecute others, set themselves up as dictators of the faith of all others, and immediately drew the sword to defend their unholy claim. Baptists, Quakers, and all others who dissented from their religious dogmas, were most cruelly persecuted, some were whipped publicly through the streets, tortured with red hot irons, chopped, mutilated, imprisoned or banished and sold into slavery, while others were put to death. That same puritanic persecuting spirit has not yet died out, but has always been ready and eager to hurl its thunderbolts against all who would not yield to them the keeping of their consciences, and hail them as the authorized exponents of the pleasure of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. Born, as we were, among them in New England, and for three score years, we have been a close observer of their attempts at usurpation and domination, we have always found them the most eager to persecute all who will not acknowledge their divine right to control the religion of others. Though loud indeed they have been, at times, in their professed love of liberty, we have never known them to omit an opportunity to sap the foundation of all religious liberty – or to accredit to others what they grasp after for themselves. At one moment they call on the secular power to enforce the observance of their holy days, or to inflict pains and penalties on those who refuse to allow them to judge them in their meats or drinks. At another, they seem suddenly alarmed for fear the country will sink to perdition for running the mail on their Sabbath day, anon a well feigned horror seizes them, because the institutions of Jehovah in the relationship of masters and servants is tolerated in some of our States, and indeed when it is not one thing, it is sure to be some other, that they will use to the full extent of their ability to stir up strife, animosity and divisions among us. The strides with which this anti-christian spirit has advanced, since the religious conscience keepers of our country have managed to control our public schools, and by chartered advantages obtained from the government, have plied their Sunday School, Missionary, and other kindred institutions to a telling effect, so that at the present day their spirit is so widely diffused abroad, that it pervades nearly all the churches of the various religious denominations. The effect of all this is painfully apparent at this moment. Very few pulpits in our country can be found, either in the North or in the South, devoted to the doctrine of peace on earth, and good will towards men. The present fratricidal war which is now threatening to desolate the fairest portion of the earth, is principally attributable to the maddening appeals which have been constantly made from the pulpits both North and South to the most violent passions of the human heart, calling for blood. Judging of the nature of the religion of America today, by the “howling of the shepherds,” or clergy, one might well conclude that Mars, and not that God who is Love, is the accredited deity. While the war cry is thundering from every popular pulpit and nearly every religious press in all the States – and those who profess to be the commissioned ministers of the gospel of peace, are foremost in denouncing as traitors all who will not receive and indorse their howlings for blood, as the genuine doctrine of the meek and lowly Lamb of God, is it strange that the most bitter hatred and revengeful feelings of depraved human nature are engendered on both sides of the dividing line? The Georgia State Convention of the New School Baptists recently presented a preamble and set of Resolutions to the Congress of the Southern Confederacy, urging on the war, and pledging themselves religiously to sustain it. While at the North almost the entire clergy are lashing their laity into a tempest of violence against their Southern brethren. As Old School Baptists, we disclaim all affinity to, or fellowship for, those New School, or Missionary Baptists, both North and South, whose principal efforts are now employed in fanning the flames of war.

Our mission is very different. As Old School Baptists, we are loyal to the powers that be, and we have from the days of John the Baptist held the reputation of a peace-loving, law-abiding people, always ready to render to Caesar the things belonging to Caesar, and to our God the things which belong to God. But never have we been known to howl for war, or seek to excite the civil powers to shed blood. How striking is now the contrast between them and those who are in their religious capacity, like hungry tigers, pressing on to deeds of cruelty! The true ambassadors of the Prince of Peace are weeping for the cause of humanity, and pouring their prayers before the throne of heaven, for a divine interposition, to roll back the war cloud, which darkens our country, to hush the ravings of demons who thirst for human gore – and to restore peace and prosperity to our distracted country. But woe unto them who have gone in the way of Cain! Their judgment slumbereth not. The righteous Judge presides upon the eternal throne of Justice – and midst the din of war, his awful voice proclaims, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.”

Brethren in Christ, wherever located, by whatever circumstances surrounded; let us endeavor to conform in all our walks and conversation strictly to the word and spirit of our God. Deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly, with our God. As much as in us lies, let us live peaceably with all men. Render not evil for evil, nor reviling for reviling. Pray for your enemies as well as for your friends – for all that are in authority over us, that we may lead a peaceable life, in honesty and godliness; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.

“Bless’d are the men of peaceful life
Who quench the coals of growing strife;
They shall be call’d the heirs of bliss’
The sons of God, the God of peace.”

Whatever duties may devolve on us as citizens of this world, to respect and to sustain the governments under which our lots, in the providence of God, are cast, as Christians and churches, or in our religious characters, it does not become us to interfere with the political affairs of States or Nations; much less to use our influence to engender strife and urge for violence. If those who are placed over us in authority find it necessary to resort to the sword, let us lament that such necessity exists – and pray that peace and prosperity may return to every part of our beloved country and to all the world, if it can consist with the pleasure of our all-wise and gracious God.

Middletown, N. Y.,
June 15, 1861.

I JOHN 2:1,2

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

Although this text has often been discussed in our columns, at the special request of a beloved brother we will venture a few remarks upon it, hoping that it may be of service to at least some of our readers who desire to know the truth. The affectionate manner of the aged apostle, in addressing the scattered

saints, as his little children, is worthy of our observation, and of imitation by those who are called to feed the flock of God; not as lords over God's heritage, but with the affectionate solicitude of a tender father in Israel, who has no greater joy than to see the children of Zion walking in the truth. The aged brethren in the church are, by divine authority, to be entreated as fathers, and the younger as brethren; and in return the aged servants of Christ are to instruct, admonish and reprove the saints with the faithful regards of a father. John not only calls them children, but he claims them as his little children. They have not yet attained their maturity, for he says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." But at present we are very small, and need to be nursed, fed, and instructed in the things of the kingdom. Having thus addressed them, he tells them why he writes to them. "These things write I unto you that ye sin not." The writing was not to make them children, or to tell them how to become children, but because they were children – as he says in his next chapter, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." The relationship is already as perfect as it ever can be or ever need to be. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" And being the sons of God it does not become us to sin – or transgress the law by which the children of God are governed; not that sin can dissolve this relationship; but because it is dishonoring to our heavenly birth, and calculated to pierce our own souls with many sorrows. The law of our King being written in the hearts of his subjects, they cannot sin without sorrow; they love holiness, and sin is loathsome and distressing to them, hence for their peace and God's declarative glory the apostle desires that they should not sin.

But the things which John has written to prevent them from sinning are very different from the things which are urged by many of the modern divines professedly for the same purpose. Carnal professors are only deterred from what they call sin by threats, terrors, and the fear of wrath and damnation; but these appliances are all omitted by John. He does not excite their fleshly passions with terror; but appeals to that immortal principle of love to God, and love to holiness which God has written in their hearts. And the things which, in the wisdom of God, have a tendency to prevent their sinning, are the very things which legalists and all workmongrel professors hold to be calculated to make them sin the more. *These things* written by John; read them all. What are they? Now are ye the sons of God; Christ is now your life. We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him. This life in which the saints are made manifest as the sons of God was with the Father, and was manifested: and this is the record, borne by the Three that bear record in heaven, and the Three that bear witness in earth. That God hath (not that he proposed to) given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. It is frequently urged in this day that to assure the saints that their life is hid with Christ in God will make them careless and indifferent about their deportment, and lead them into licentiousness. But John knew better, for he was inspired by the Holy Ghost to write these very things to them, for the very opposite purpose that they should not sin. The terrors of hell may work upon the selfish elements of carnal nature, and make them cringe and tremble; but it is the love of God that leadeth the children of God to repentance. Hence the things written by John of the perfect security of all the saints in Christ, and of his Advocacy with the Eternal Father in their behalf, and of his propitiatory atonement for them, presents such incentives to holiness as only the children of God can appreciate, or have any knowledge of. If you would deter the legalist or the hypocrite from transgression, threaten him with retribution in wrath, terrify him with the flames of hell. But the christian is moved by the love of God and of holiness which God has implanted in his heart Tell the ungodly that he has an Advocate with the Father, who is sure to gain his cause and secure for him the approbation of Jehovah if he sins, and he will indulge his lusts, and take his fill of sin; because sin is his element, he has not lost his relish for it; and all he desires is that he may escape punishment; for the children who bear the image of Christ and have his spirit in them, are all the more disgusted with sin, as they are enabled to see and contemplate the holiness of God. *And if any man sin*

we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. Although the little children of God have this immortal principle in them, they cannot sin because their seed abideth in them, and they cannot sin because they are born of God, and are led by his spirit, yet they painfully feel the workings within them of an opposite nature, which is born of the flesh, and in which there dwells no good thing, which wars against the law of their mind, and brings them into captivity to the law of sin, which is in their members. This would utterly discourage them, if they did not know they had an able, faithful and infallible Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, in whose righteousness they participate, and are thereby justified before God. They groan, being burdened with their earthly nature, and long to be delivered from the body of this death; but their faith still clings to Jesus Christ the righteous as the only foundation of their hope for eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began. As their banner is the banner of love, and as love is the motive power that works in them to glorify God, the more fully assured they are that God has effectually secured their eternal salvation in Jesus Christ the righteous, beyond the possibility of a failure, the more exceedingly careful and prayerful they are to avoid sinning against that God whom they so dearly love.

As their Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, perfectly understands their case. By his knowledge shall he justify many. “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his.” He is always right. Not only righteous in all his perfections, as God, as man, and as Mediator between God and men, and the saints are made the righteousness of God in him, and he is of God made unto them Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption, and he is the Lord our Righteousness; but officially, he is also righteous – never wrong. He advocates no cause in which he can fail of complete success. He never mistakes his clients, nor does he ever attempt for any upon uncertainty. Nor does he plead upon any indefinite or uncertain grounds. His plea for his children before the Father is not what they have done to entitle them to divine favor, for no such plea could stand, or gain the suit for them. But he pleads what God and grace has done. In his advocacy for us, he takes the sealed book, searches the eternal records of the counsel and will of God – shows every demand of law and justice met and canceled by himself, and presents himself the approved propitiation for their sins. *And he is the propitiation for our sins.* A propitiation, according to our standard lexicons, is that which renders propitious, or that which removes wrath and condemnation; an atonement for sin. In this sense Jesus Christ the righteous, standing in relation to his people as the Head of the body, the church, he having put away the sins of the church, and being the righteousness of God unto them – presents them holy and unblameable in himself. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.” For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. As our righteousness, and our atoning sacrifice, he has borne our griefs, carried our sorrows, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.. That is, as our Advocate with the Father. He was delivered for our offenses, and raised from the dead for our justification. Hence the atonement, or at-one-ment is made, the propitiation is perfect, and the little children are safe.

And not for ours only, but the sins of the whole world. This atonement was not only for those primitive saints which were called by grace, in the cities of Judah in the days of the apostles, but, this being the only propitiation in all the world, his propitiation removes all condemnation from the people of God in

any part of the world, at any period. This mission of Jesus was to save his people from their sins, and God has informed us that the Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. And "This people," he says, "I have formed for myself. They shall show forth my praise." They are redeemed out of every nation, kindred, and tongue under heaven – therefore the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ our Advocate was not for the saints immediately written to by John alone, but covered the sins of all his people from the beginning of time to the end of the world; in every nation under heaven. So that there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. No man cometh to the Father but by him.

The play on words by arminians, universalists and others who would pervert the Scriptures of truth only shows their readiness to sport with their own deceivings. Should they give the words, *the whole world* an unlimited application, it would include swine and horses, serpents and vipers, as well as men and women, and if the words be restricted in their application, the only sure rule of restriction must be to the redeemed family of God – out of the whole world. The words, *the whole world*, are used by this same apostle in this restricted sense, in this same epistle both in reference to the saints and the ungodly. In reference to the saints, as in our text, meaning all the redeemed of the Lord throughout the world; and in Chapter 5:19, in reverence exclusively to the ungodly. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." This was the common way of speaking and writing in the New Testament. For instance, Jerusalem and Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan, were baptized by John in Jordan. But the Pharisees, who dwelt in Jerusalem and Judea and in the regions round about Jordan were not baptized by John in Jordan – only those were meant who brought forth fruit meet for repentance. The proclamation of the advent of Christ was glad tidings of great joy to *all men*; but Herod, when he heard the tidings, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Caesar made a decree that all the world should be taxed; but he levied no tax on the continent of America. The Jewish council said: "If we let these men go, the whole world will go after them; and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation." We might multiply examples in the Scriptures where such words are used in a restricted sense, and if they were not so used by John in our text, then there must have been two distinct *whole worlds*: the one redeemed to God – saved and called out of the world, having Christ as their Advocate and propitiation, and the other whole world lying in wickedness without a propitiation or an Advocate with the Father. But as we have neither time nor inclination to enter the list with cavilers and infidels, we leave them to draw their own conclusions, until God may open their blind eyes if it be his pleasure to do so; for we have no power to deliver them from the power of darkness, or to translate them into the kingdom.

We hope that the inquiring saints may be edified, and our object will be secured.

Middletown, N. Y.
July 1, 1861.



I PETER 1:22

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”

As we intimated in a late number, we now offer such views as we have on the above text, in answer to the request of brother George Fettenger, of Iowa. The apostle addressed the saints which were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, and having set forth the grand principles on which their salvation was established, he proceeds to instruct and admonish them in perfect harmony with the foundation of their faith and hope. “Forasmuch,” says he, “as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth,” etc.

The principal inquiry of our correspondent seems to be as to the meaning of the apostle, in regard to their having purified their souls, when the Scriptures so manifestly teach that the cleansing and purification of the saints is attributable only to the blood of Jesus Christ, which alone can purge us from guilt, and present us holy and unblamable in the sight of God. We must observe that the apostle in the connection had clearly established the doctrine of salvation by the sovereign grace and atoning blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Their standing and acceptance before God was in Christ. Elected, or chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, and that according, not to their works or merits, but according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and through the sanctification (separation, consecration, or setting apart by regeneration,) of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The saints had not therefore purified their souls by virtue of any meritorious action of their own, nor do we understand this text to speak of expiation for sin, or atonement for guilt, for that is very positively ascribed in the verses immediately preceding, to the precious blood of Christ, as possessing the only power or virtue that can possibly redeem sinners to God. But the purification of their souls, in the sense of this text, is from the defilement of error, which they had received by tradition from their fathers, by which they had formerly been defiled; which had led them to confide in the flesh, and to follow and obey the flesh in its dictations, and that in disobedience to the truth. But now, being sanctified, or set apart by the Spirit, and as the apostle adds, Being born again, not of a corruptible seed, but of an incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever, they have received the truth, and the truth has set up its throne in their hearts, and by the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, they have obeyed the truth, are governed by the power of the truth, and in obedience to the mandates of the truth as it is in Jesus, they have laid aside all malice, and all guile, and all hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes they desire the sincere milk of the word, that word by and of which they are born again, as being congenial with the new life which God has given them in their new and heavenly birth, they by their obedience to the truth have cast off, or laid aside, their former malice, guile, hypocrisy, etc., and thereby they have purified their souls in obeying the truth. As all error is defiling and filthy, so the truth, which is the opposite of error, is pure, and heavenly in its nature. Truth flows from the word of God by which they are born again, as the sincere milk of the word of God that liveth and abideth forever. Thus while obedience to the flesh, to traditions of the fathers, according to the flesh, corrupts and defiles, the opposite course of obedience to the truth, purifies and cleanses from falsehood, deception and hypocrisy. Under the ceremonial law the

Israelite who transgressed the law was pronounced unclean. But a faithful obedience to the precepts was considered clean. God said to Israel, "Wash you, make you clean." How? The manner is pointed out. "Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow," etc. – Isaiah 1:16,17. But it may be asked, How had the saints addressed by Peter purified their souls by obeying the truth? The apostle tells how: through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren. An effort of the flesh to cultivate a love for the people of God, or the things of the Spirit, can at the most, only amount to a neat counterfeit. There is no brotherhood to, or fraternal love for, the saints felt in reality until we are born of the Spirit, for, All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass, which will soon wither, and fall away. Hypocrites may make great professions of love and feign an ardent love, but it is not reliable; it is not the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, but an imitation, a deception; but that love which is the fruit of the Spirit is real, vital and lasting as eternity, for it is the love of God, and is therefore eternal and immutable, and is consequently unfeigned; it flows out freely, spontaneously, sincerely and ardently to the brethren, to their kindred in Christ. Not only in times of prosperity, when religion walks abroad in silver slippers, but when brethren are oppressed, despised, afflicted or persecuted. To know that a dear brother or sister is in distress, and needs consolation and sympathy, then will this love find vent, it will gush forth in the most unmistakable and undisguised tenderness. It will not say to a needy and destitute brother, Be warmed, and be clothed, and at the same time withhold the things which are required; but it will weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn, and if necessary divide with him the last loaf, or the last dollar or dime. That love which is induced and cultivated by theory or tradition from sire to son, and grows only out of the flesh, and exhibits only the fleshly passions which belong to our depraved nature, is just as corrupt and polluted as the nature from which it emanates; but that which we receive in the new birth, is as pure and holy as the fountain from which it proceeds. When through the Spirit therefore the saints obey the truth, they love one another with a pure heart fervently; the heart is made pure, it is sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the law of Christ who is essentially the Truth, as well as the Way and the Life, is written in the pure heart, the new heart which God gives to his people. Then the good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things; from such an heart, unfeigned love proceeds; but all pretension to christian love which comes from any other source is feigned, deceptive and unavailing before God.

The very expression of the apostle, Seeing that ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, implies that none but such can be profited by the admonition, See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

We are told that because iniquity should abound, the love of many should wax cold. And is not the same cause at all times productive of similar effects? This was the case, according to the words of our Lord, when the abomination which maketh desolate, stood in the holy place, and the fearful judgments of God were poured out upon the ancient Jerusalem. And at all other times when iniquity has abounded, has it not had the same tendency, that is, with many? Not with all, for some have manifested their love to God, to holiness, and especially to the brethren more abundantly at such times. But prevailing iniquity in the world serves to discriminate between feigned and unfeigned love. Far beyond any other time that any of the present generation have known, the present is a time in which iniquity abounds; the man of sin is permitted to scatter fire-brands, arrows and death, broadcast through the world, and do we not see that many who formerly professed to love the people of God most fervently, are giving the saddest evidences that their love, if not feigned, has grown lamentably cold? Are there not brethren in this day, ready to deliver up brethren to the sword, with whom they have hitherto professed to be in

fellowship and love? If we see such in hostile array against each other, and ready to consign each other to death, must we not conclude their love, if they ever had any, has reached the freezing point? But let us, dear brethren, whose hearts are cleansed from dead works to serve the living God, heed well the admonition of our text, and See that we love one another with a pure heart, fervently; that we may know how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.

Middletown, N. Y.,
July 1, 1861.

I PETER 3:18-20

In our last number, Brother J. W. Livingston called for our views on I Peter 3:18-20:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

In our attempt to comply with the request of our brother to give our views on this text, which has puzzled those of more light and understanding than we possess, we hope we may not be left to darken counsel by words without knowledge, or to embarrass, instead of edifying, those who honestly enquire after the truth. We frankly confess that the latter part of this text has been very dark and obscure to our mind, and what we shall present on the subject is only to be regarded as *our views*, until at least the reader shall find them sustained by the testimony of the scriptures.

In the context, the apostle has been treating upon the new and spiritual birth, which is of incorruptible seed, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever; in distinction from that birth which is of corruptible seed, or of the flesh, which (like grass) is corruptible, and the glory of which is as the flower of the grass, which must also perish, or fall away. The subject of this new birth, like the living and ever abiding word from which it proceeds, must live and abide forever; and those who are so born, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word (that is, of the word of God which liveth and abideth forever), as it is congenial with the production of the new birth which is by the same word. Having drawn the line between the distinct elements of which the Christian, in his present state, is composed; the one of the flesh, which is grass, corruptible, mortal, and perishable; the other, of incorruptible seed by the word of God, and therefore, incorruptible and abiding, he goes on to show that in our earthly and fleshly standing, the relationship in the flesh is not annulled, nor changed by our new birth; the production of the corruptible and that of the incorruptible seed are brought into personal identity, for the time being, but still in opposition to each other, insomuch that the spirit wars against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit; or, the corruptible against the incorruptible, until the grass shall wither, and the flower thereof shall pass away. Having defined this subject in the most lucid manner, Peter proceeds to show some of the obligations which are binding on Christians in their personal relations to each other and to mankind, in the flesh, as well as what is enjoined on them as children of the spiritual and immortal birth. In their spiritual identity they are “a chosen generation” – to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. In their flesh

they are admonished to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles, and to submit to every ordinance (or constitutional law) of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers. Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the King. "Servants," that is Christian servants, for Peter as an apostle has nothing to do with any but Christians, "be subject to your masters, with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." The same as Christians in their fleshly relations are bound by the laws of Christ to be loyal to kings and governors, or to whatever form of constitutional government they may be placed in the providence of God, to let every soul be subject to the higher power. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands," and in all our fleshly relations, to observe the same rules and authorities which would be binding on us if we were not Christians. And as this fidelity is enjoined on all Christians, not only to the good and gentle, who may have dominion over them, but also to the froward; the apostle admits that a faithful obedience to these laws of Christ will, beyond all doubt, subject them sometimes to suffer unjustly from the dominion of tyrants, still he says it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing, and then adds the words of our text, giving us a pattern and example in the person of our divine Lord and Master.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." He would not call on his children to suffer unjustly from the froward and tyrannical, who may have a brief authority over them, if he had not himself suffered the just for the unjust. The will of God was so that Christ should suffer, though holy and harmless, and separate from sinners; although no guile was found in his mouth. He did not object to drink the bitter cup, which was pressed to his holy lips, saying that he had violated no law, transgressed no rule that was binding on him, but recognizing his Father's will in the matter, he said, when pressed with the unutterable agony, "If it be possible, let this cup pass, nevertheless not my will, but thy will be done." Learn then, ye suffering Christians, to bear with patience so far as men are concerned, and when reviled, revile not again. Christ suffered for sins – not for sins which he had committed, for he knew no sin. Holy, pure, spotless and immaculate in every respect, he was emphatically just, but he suffered for the sins of the unjust. He was crucified by wicked hands, of those whose wicked hearts were full of violence. But who were they? The Jews and Romans! The men of Israel and the Gentiles were the immediate agents in the bloody tragedy on Calvary!

"But knotty whips and jagged thorns
In vain do I accuse;
In vain I blame the Roman bands,
And the more spiteful Jews-
'Twere you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear."

The sufferings of Christ were vicarious. He suffered the just for the unjust. The Lord has laid on him the iniquities of all his people. He was delivered for our offences, and was raised from the dead for our justification. And he has himself said, "I lay down my life for the sheep." The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. The sufferer was personally just, but those for whom he suffered were legally unjust. He was as a lamb without spot or blemish; but those for whom he bore the penalty of the divine law were guilty sinners, and by nature, children of wrath, even as others; and the object or design of his sufferings was that *he might bring us to God*. "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.” There was no other way to bring us to God, or to reclaim us from our wanderings, but by redemption; and none but Jesus had the right of redemption, he being the nearest of kin; and none but Jesus had the ability to redeem us to God, for there is salvation in none other. It was not possible that the blood of bulls or heifers could purge us from our sins, and in our sins we could not see God. The design then of the atonement was special, definite and exclusively for his people. The iniquities which were laid on him he has put away by the sacrifice of himself; he bore them in his own body on the tree; and by one offering he has perfected them that are sanctified.

“Being put to death in the flesh”. The second Adam, which is the Lord from heaven, was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he, by the grace of God, might taste death for every one for whom he was delivered up. The Word which was with God, and which was God, in whom was life, (that life which is the light of men) was made flesh, and dwelt among us. His flesh was indispensable for the work of redemption. He took not on him the nature of angels, for in the nature of angels he could not taste of death for men. For men in the flesh he was to die, and to represent them in the flesh in which they were sinners, he must be made flesh, and stand before the law in the likeness of sinful flesh. He was, therefore, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem us from under the law. Bear in mind the theme of the apostle in the connection of our text, *the flesh* and the spirit, the incorruptible and the corruptible seeds – the flesh which is grass, and the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. The Word of God, which is the fountain of all our spiritual life, the Lord from heaven, etc., to represent us in the flesh and die the just for the unjust, must be made flesh, or take on him a fleshly body that could suffer and die, in which to be put to death. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” *He was put to death in the flesh*, not in the spirit which liveth and abideth forever, for that aside from his flesh was immortal and could not die; and hence his assumption of flesh, that he might taste death, or be put to death in the flesh. By the term *flesh*, in regard to what Christ took on him for the purpose of suffering, we understand according to Christ’s own explanation to be ‘That which is born of the flesh;’ namely, the seed of Abraham, or that which his children are partakers of; soul, body, and all that Adam was, when man became a living soul. Before he took on him a body in which to suffer and a soul which was poured out to death, or which was made an offering for sin, (Isa. 53:10) he was the Lord in heaven, and the anointed Mediator, in whom all the Church of God was chosen, and in whom God had blessed them with all spiritual blessings, before the foundation of the world. But for the suffering of death he took the same nature on him, in which his people had sinned, a body in which he bore our sins, a soul that was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death, and a spirit which could be troubled, could groan, and which he committed to his Father, when he yielded up the ghost on the cross. His whole person, including soul, body, and spirit, was just, holy, and pure. The holy thing which was conceived in the womb of the virgin, and born of her, was unblemished, undefiled, spotless, and pure, although he was made sin for us, or in other words, all the sins of his people were laid upon him, and he was legally held responsible for them, and did suffer the full weight and penalty of the law to the complete satisfaction of Eternal Justice, for them, the same as though they had been committed personally by him; for the Lord had laid them on him, and he was able to put them away by the sacrifice of himself. It was in his being found in fashion as a man in the flesh that the law could recognize him as the legal representative of his people in their flesh, in which they had sinned, and in the flesh to put him to death. The importance of the doctrine of the incarnation is most vital, for John testifies that, “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,

is not of God; and this is that spirit of anti-Christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come: and even now already is in the world.” God was manifest in the flesh. All fulness dwelt in him. All the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily; and all the fulness of his Church also dwelt in him, and is complete in him who is the head of all principality and power. The spirit of Immortality, the power of an endless life by which he is made a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, was in him, as the life which was with the Father and was manifested, I John 1:1,2. And which God hath given to us in him, I John 5:11,12. He was put to death in the flesh.

“But quickened by the spirit.” By what spirit was he quickened? By the spirit of life and immortality which was made flesh and dwelt among us. That spirit which is the fountain and source of regeneration of which Peter is treating in connection with our text, and which he distinguishes from all flesh which is grass, which is corruptible, which can die or which is mortal. His flesh qualified him to die; but his flesh, in itself, aside from the indwelling, the Eternal Spirit, through which he offered himself without spot to God, had no power to raise from the dead. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit,” etc. His simply dying in the flesh did not of itself demonstrate his divinity; for all flesh is grass, all die, all flesh is subject to death; but the power of his resurrection shows that Christ was in that flesh; and being quickened by the Spirit, justifies the character which he assumed, and proves that he is the Son of God, and the complete Savior of his people. The spirit which raised him up from the dead is not only a life producing spirit, but it is life itself. Thus Paul, in discriminating between the flesh and the spirit, says, “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin: but *the spirit is life*, because of righteousness. But if the spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you. Rom. 8:10,11. Thus clearly identifying the spirit that quickened the crucified body of Christ, and which dwells in us by regeneration now, and which shall ultimately resurrect the mortal bodies of all who are born of that incorruptible seed, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. In this flesh, like grass, even Jesus could bleed and die – pour out his soul, yield up his spirit, and slumber with the dead; but in the Eternal Spirit of life and immortality, he had power to take up his life again, and destroy death, and swallow up death in victory. His crucified body was raised up from the dead, by this quickening spirit, and by this quickening spirit, in regeneration, all the saints are born of incorruptible seed by the Word of God, and by this self same spirit the mortal bodies shall finally be clothed in immortality – and be fashioned and made like unto his raised and glorified body. “For whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” The spirit which brought again from the dead the body of our Lord Jesus Christ is the same spirit that now dwells in all who are born of God, by which they are sealed unto the day of redemption, to-wit: the redemption of our body. And it is called the spirit of the Lord God, which is upon him, by which he is anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, etc., Isa. 6 1:1, and that “*By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*” The spirits in prison were those unto whom Christ was anointed to preach good tidings, whose prison doors he came to open and whom he came to deliver out of their prison houses. If they were not prisoners, they would not need deliverance. They were prisoners, yet they were prisoners of hope, Zech. 9:12. As Paul says, “In hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” They were captives, sold under sin; lawful captives, but Christ has led their captivity captive, and received gifts for men. In one general view, all whom Christ came to redeem were prisoners, and his ministry to them all is by the same spirit of the Lord God, by which he was raised up from the dead, and his preaching or proclamation of deliverance to them is by that spirit; whether we understand it as applicable to his personal manifestations in their individual experience respectively, or

through the prophets, apostles, evangelists, teachers, and pastors, or by whatever gifts the saints are edified; for, there are different gifts, but all by the same spirit, and that is the spirit of Christ. The prophets sought diligently to know what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it spake of his sufferings and of the glory that should follow. This spirit is that with which the apostles were endowed from above, and which came upon them like a mighty rushing wind from heaven on the day of Pentecost. And, in short, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

“These spirits which were in prison, were sometime disobedient.” And in all time, until called by grace, of every redeemed child it may be said there has been a time in which they lived in disobedience to God, and in opposition to this spirit of life, of truth, of holiness – and the apostle refers to an instance in the days of Noah, when the ark was being prepared. The spirit of Christ was then in Noah, who, by it, was a preacher of righteousness; but his preaching by that spirit was resisted by the antediluvians. And Stephen charged the Jews, “Ye do always resist the Spirit, as your fathers did, so do ye,” etc. And all who oppose the truth as it is in Jesus, do also in like manner resist the spirit. We do not, of course, mean that God, the Holy Ghost, attempts to operate on their hearts, and they successfully resist and prevent him. Such a sentiment would represent the sinner as being stronger than God. But the spirit of Christ as it exists in all the saints is opposed by the flesh which warreth against it, and by the world which cannot receive it, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. Christ came and preached to you, dear brother, and to you, dear sister, when your spirit was in prison; when arrested in your mad career of sin and folly, quickened and made sensible that you were a guilty sinner against a holy God; when you, as a prisoner, were under arrest, and brought before the awful bar of Justice; when you were compelled to plead guilty to every charge; when your sins were set before you, and Justice with uplifted sword demanded satisfaction, and your mouth was stopped, and you stood guilty before God – were you not bound hand and foot, so that with your hand you could do nothing to expiate your guilt, and with your feet you could not run away from or escape the avenger of blood? Strong chains of darkness bound you in your cell, and you could not open the prison door. Were you not then a spirit in prison, until the anointed Jesus came and preached peace and salvation, life and liberty to your captive spirit?

And are there not seasons with old Christians when they find themselves shut up as with hewn stones, so that they cannot come forth, and the prison none can open until Jesus by his spirit comes to preach to you?

He went by this spirit and preached unto the spirits in prison, when he entered the dark domains of death, when he dwelt among the dead. This was loud preaching to them; it told them that he had bowed his heavens and come down, that he had descended to the lowest parts of the earth; that the iron gates were opened to him, and that he had come to destroy death and the grave, and to deliver them who were all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. When he arose, he opened the doors of death, and destroyed the power of the grave. And as he arose as the first-fruits of them that slept, he gave the assurance that he would also quicken from the dead, and in due time raise up and glorify the redeemed bodies of all his saints who sleep in the dust of the earth.

To illustrate this bearing of our subject, the apostle uses the figure of the ark, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved. This he calls a figure; and as a figure, sets forth the doctrine of salvation through or by grace. As Noah and his family were preserved from the destroying waters of the deluge in the ark, so Christ and all the spiritual family are saved from wrath, in the church of God. And as, while the ark was being prepared, some were disobedient; so while God is gathering into his church the heirs of

immortality, some are disobedient, and some who are called by grace are conscious that they were in that number.

“The like figure, whereunto baptism doth also now save us.” Just as the temporal deliverance of Noah and his family in the ark was a figure of salvation by grace, so is also christian baptism a like figure, signifying the same thing. Baptism cannot save us from the curse of the law, or the blood of Christ might have been spared; neither can it put away the filth of the flesh, which is grass, but it is the answer of a good conscience toward God. It is in answer to an eternal principle implanted in us by an incorruptible seed; it shows our willing subjection and allegiance to Jesus Christ, and our joyful espousal of his cause, and open profession of his name. And at the same time sets forth the doctrine of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and of our being buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also are to walk in newness of life.

Brother Livingston, we have made rather a long article of this, but if any thing herein written shall be of service to you, or to any of our readers, we shall have cause to be thankful to God. May you and they carefully and prayerfully compare our views with the infallible standard of truth, and endorse our views only so far as they are clearly sustained by the scriptures of truth.

Middletown, N. Y.,
July 15, 1861.

REPLY TO FRIEND SPERRY

Frankfort, Ohio, July, 1861.

Dear Sir: – There is a point of doctrine in theology that I am not fully posted on, and upon which I cannot fully go with my brethren, and upon which subject I should like to see a full and scriptural investigation, and if it should please you to give your views upon it, I should like to have them, either in a private communication or in the “Signs of the Times”. The subject, in short, is this: Are all men under obligation to do what is utterly impossible for them to do? Does condemnation rest or turn on doing, or not doing, on obedience or disobedience? Does salvation rest upon a more permanent and solid basis? The eternal oaths and promises of God, who never changes? What kind of a law was it that Adam violated, a moral or spiritual law? What was the penalty? Can anything more be required than the penalty? Are all men under obligation to keep the law in the most strict sense, and suffer the penalty at the same time? Will justice require two payments for one debt? Is not every son and daughter of Adam, now, at this very time, suffering the penalty of Adam’s transgression, and must eternally suffer if not delivered from under the curse of the law? Does the law make sin, or does the law punish anybody? Or is it sin alone that is the direct and immediate cause of all evil? Does the good Lord inflict punishment upon any of his creatures? Is it not the necessary and natural consequence of sin to bring its own punishment? Do not all act of necessity, yet willingly? Do we not eat of necessity, drink of necessity, live of necessity, believe of necessity, do this or that thing of necessity, because we could do nothing else? Lastly, do we not all die of necessity? Some people who have not thought much upon the

doctrine of necessity, and perhaps careless, say that it makes God the author of sin, and thereby exculpates from guilt. But that is certainly one of the most lame ideas that ever entered a man's brain. If, indeed, God was the author of sin, there would be some plausibility in it. Would it be any melioration of guilt to tell the court or jury that he was naturally so bad and wicked that he could not help but kill his neighbor? I think not, but rather to increase it. Elder Beebe, although you and I may differ in some of our views on theology, yet I hope we differ honestly, or ignorantly, and upon that principle look for forgiveness. I do not wish you to understand that I think or mean that men, all men, are not under obligation to God as accountable beings, for that would be unavoidable, as all are sinners, and it is sin, and sin alone, that separates between us and our God. I would not be so very solicitous upon the subject, but I think it involves one of the fundamental doctrines of the plan of salvation, to wit, salvation by grace. The Arminian says, All men are under obligation to believe to the saving of their souls, and that it is in their power to do so. Whilst, on the other hand, the Old Regular Baptists hold that all are under obligation to keep the whole law, but without power to do it. Now the former at first view would appear most consistent, but it will not bear to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary; it will be found wanting. The other seems to look somewhat incongruous, for a dead man to be bound to do the work of a living man. When a man is alive he works of necessity. When and wherever God speaks there is power. Now I shall close my scribble, by informing you that we had a member join our church when over one hundred and one years old, and who died about a month ago. His name was Frederick Bray, and an old revolutionary soldier. If you see fit you can respond, if not all will be right.

Yours very respectfully,
Isaac Sperry.

Reply. – The point of doctrine on which our old friend Sperry requests our views, seems to branch out into a number of inquiries, which would require much time and space, even if we had ability to answer elaborately. We are aware that those with whom friend Sperry has chosen his quarters, and with whom he claims fraternity, (the New School Baptists) harp much upon the obligations of fallen sinners to meet the demands of the law of God. They plead that the inability of sinners to fulfill the jots and tittles of the divine law does not invalidate the claims of that law upon them, therefore they justify themselves in calling on dead sinners to do what they acknowledge that they have no ability to do, and as ministers of the law, they are so far consistent with themselves. If salvation were by the works of the law, it would be proper and right to call on them for such works as the law of God demands, but there is not a particle of gospel in such preaching. The ministration of the law to sinners is death. By the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God. Hence, we are expressly informed that as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse. The Judaizing teachers, and all other workmongers, have much to say on the subject of moral obligations and human ability, but the gospel ministry is a proclamation of life and salvation to guilty, condemned sinners through Jesus Christ. The demands of the law of God are no less binding because we are carnal and sold under sin. In order to be justified by the law, we must fulfill all the requisitions of the law, by a perfect and perpetual obedience to all its precepts, in thought, in words and actions. We must be all that the law requires us to be, do all the law enjoins on us to do, and avoid all that the law forbids. The man that has ever transgressed the least precept, is irrecoverably lost forever, so far as the law is concerned.

“Curs’d be the man, forever curs’d,
That doth one single sin commit;
Death and damnation for the first,
Without relief, and infinite.

Thus Sinai roars, and around the throne,
Thunder, and fire, and vengeance flings;
But, Jesus, thy dear gaping wounds,
And Calvary speak gentler things.”

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye hear the law? “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.” The fatal mistake with Arminian workmongers is that they regard the fallen sons of men as *probationers*, in a state of experiment or trial, having what they call a day of grace allotted, in which, if they will do the best they can, they shall be saved, but if they do not do something, they shall be condemned. This is making void the law of God by their traditions, or doctrines, for the Bible teaches no such things, but quite to the contrary. He that believeth not, is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him. From the moment when Adam transgressed the law, or commandment of God, in the garden of Eden, sin and death has passed on all men, because all have sinned. All were in Adam at the time, and all were Adam, hence all his posterity are the development of that Adam that sinned. His nature is our nature, and his guilt is our guilt, consequently we are conceived in sin, and shappen in iniquity, and we all go astray as soon as we be born, speaking lies. As convicted sinners we are under sentence, and wrath, every mouth is stopped, and all the world is guilty before God. Our condemnation does rest on our doing and our not doing, but remember, the die is cast, our condemnation rests on what we did, and in what we did not do, six thousand years ago. The condemnation under which we are born into this world does rest, or turn, upon our disobedience of the law of God in Adam; and all the works we are capable of doing subsequently to the fall cannot recover us from that condemnation. But if our old friend desires to know whether our salvation rests or turns upon our doing or not doing, we answer, No! “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, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ.” “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Death is the wages of sin, the payment for what we have done, and rests or turns on our doings. But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord; that does not depend or turn on our doing, or not doing, on our obedience or disobedience, but on a permanent and solid basis. And the only hope of all God’s people rests on the promise which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began. Not the law, but,

“The gospel bears our spirits up;
A faithful and unchanging God,
Lays the foundation of our hope,
In oaths and promises and blood.”

The kind of law which Adam transgressed, and which we all transgressed, was the law of God, under which we as his creatures were created; a law embodying God’s right to govern, and the obligation of his creatures to obey; and the penalty of it was death. Nothing more than the penalty of that law is demanded, but that penalty involves all the human family in guilt and death, and from that death the law makes no provision for deliverance, for salvation and immortality.

In answer to the inquiry, “Are all under obligation to keep the law in the most strict sense, and suffer the penalty at the same time?” we repeat that all are condemned already and under wrath, totally depraved, without either disposition or desire to keep the law. And if they could and would keep the law in its letter and spirit, from this day forth, as long as they live, it would not atone for the guilt and condemnation in which they came into the world. The legal demands of the law are not changed, they cannot change, for the law being holy, is immutable, and all its demands must be met and honored, and all its penalties endured, or we must be damned, and such is our poverty and depravity that,

“No works or duties of our own
Can for the smallest sin atone.”

Of course if it were possible for us to keep the law in the most strict sense, there would be no penalty to endure, but as we have already sinned, that is impossible. None but Jesus has ever kept the law in the most strict sense, and none but Jesus had power to redeem sinners from the guilt of sin, and from the curse and dominion of the law, consequently there is salvation in no other name.

“Jesus, my God, thy blood alone,
Hath power sufficient to atone;
Thy blood can make me white as snow,
No legal works could cleanse me so.”

Friend Sperry inquires, “Will justice require two payments for one debt?” We answer, Certainly not. Those for whom Christ has suffered the dreadful penalty of the law are effectually and forever redeemed from sin, death and hell, and “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” With his stripes they are healed. They are freely justified, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. They shall never come into condemnation, but have passed from death unto life. For what the law could not do for them, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

“Is not every son and daughter of Adam now, at this very time, suffering the penalty of Adam’s transgression; and must they not forever suffer, if not delivered from under the curse of the law?” We answer, so far as our mortality may be reckoned as a penalty of Adam’s transgression, it falls alike on all the children of Adam. But the mortality of our bodies is not a payment made by us to justice; but it is the payment, or wages which justice pays to sin. All the saints redeemed from death by Christ, shall be completely delivered from its power and dominion when the last enemy shall be destroyed, when their body shall be changed, and fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body, in the resurrection. Death shall still hold his dominion over the ungodly, and their final state of perdition is called the second death; but the second death shall have no power over them that die in the Lord. The dissolution of the mortal bodies of the saints is not a curse, or a penalty, for Christ has suffered all the penalties of the law for them, and he has destroyed death and him that had the power of death. Consequently, when this earthly house of their tabernacle shall be dissolved, it will be a deliverance and a privilege, not a curse. The risen Jesus holds the keys of death, and he will make that change a triumph to his people. Write, from henceforth, (not cursed, but) “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

“Does the law make sin, or does the law punish anybody?” Where there is no law there can be no transgression, for sin is the transgression of the law. Hence the strength of sin is the law; yet the law is in itself holy, just and good, it does not make sin, but it detects sin, and inflicts its penalty on sinners. The law is the ministration of death, and that death, inflicted for sin, is punishment. Sin is the cause of

all evil. The good Lord does inflict punishment on sinners who die in their sins, for they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

“Is it not the necessity and natural consequence of sin to bring its own punishment?” Not independently of God and his law. If men were free agents, they would have a right to do as they please. The reason why it was sin for Adam to eat of the tree which was in the midst of the garden was because God had forbidden it. Its baneful effect was from its being a transgression. We know of nothing in that act that would have involved guilt or wrath, but the disobedience of the act. The strength of sin is the law, in the absence then of the law there is neither sin nor penalty. We certainly live and die, eat and drink, believe and disbelieve, etc., from necessity, having no power to avert or change the fixed laws of nature, and notwithstanding this necessity we do many of these willingly. The hungry cannot resist a desire for food, the thirsty have no power to resist the desire for drink, we were all passive in our births, as to time, place, parentage, and all the circumstances. Nor have we the choice in regard to believing; no man has power to believe what he pleases. We are compelled to believe many things which we would gladly disbelieve if we could. The Arminians preach that sinners are required to believe as a condition of salvation, but they repudiate the doctrine of the Bible, that faith is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), and that a belief of the truth is a gift of God to the heirs of salvation. (II Thess. 2:13; Phil. 1:29.)

We do not agree that “the Old Regular Baptists hold that all are under obligations to keep the whole law, but without power to do it.” The apostles and primitive saints were Old Regular Baptists, and their faith on this subject, as recorded in the New Testament, is that, “Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law.” But Christ has redeemed his people from under the law, and they are no more under the law, but under grace; that they are now under the law to Christ, and his law is not now written on tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of their heart. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ has made them free from the law of sin and death. Those who are born of the Spirit, receive not the Spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith, and they are not required to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses; Christ has fulfilled that law for them, and redeemed them from all its authority. They are dead to the law by the body of Christ, and are married to him that is risen from the dead, and now being under Christ (and not Moses, or the law) they serve God in the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. They need not the fiery law to lash them to an unwilling task, but they desire to have grace whereby they may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Instead of the yoke of Moses, which neither we nor the fathers were able to bear, the saints take on them the yoke (or law) of Christ, which is easy, and his burden, which is light, and find rest (instead of toil) to their souls.

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 1, 1861.

ROMANS 5:18,19

“Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

The great doctrine of redemption by grace is the theme of the inspired apostle in our text, and indeed of the gospel ministry. The consideration of this subject involves the fall, guilt and just condemnation of God's people in the earthly Adam, and their deliverance in the second Adam, which is the Lord from heaven. Treating on this subject in our text and its connections, the apostle alludes to the federal relationship of the two Adams, and their respective posterities. The first Adam, being of the earth, earthy, is unable to develop or produce a posterity of a different character or quality from himself; his offspring are consequently like himself, of the earth, earthy. The second Adam, being the Lord from heaven, is spiritual, and the seminal, or progenitive head of his spiritual posterity. Hence the earthy Adam is the figure of the spiritual Adam which was to come (see verse 14). "And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit, Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward 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." (I Cor. 15:45-48) The guilt and condemnation of the posterity of the first Adam bears even date with the first transgression of Adam in the garden, before the first of all his numerous progeny was born. They were all created in Adam, and they were Adam, and were therefore righteously included in the guilt of Adam's transgression, for they all being in him, were at the same time in the transgression. For such is and unavoidably must be the nature and effect of federal relationship. Therefore, the apostle tells us, in our text, "As by the offence of one." That *one* was an entire race, embodied in one man, but to be developed by multiplication into all the tribes of mankind. "By the offence of [this] one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." This argument Paul makes conclusive and indisputable by the fact that by one man's offence, death reigned by one. None can deny this, that from Adam to Moses death reigned over all the children of Adam, and that death still continues to reign over all the sons of men. Death cannot reign but by sin, for the sting of death is sin, and the wages of the sin is death. Therefore it is evident that the sting infused the poison which results in death, when all were embodied in the one undeveloped man. This judgment which has already come upon all men is the decision of God, the Judge of all; it cannot be reversed or annulled. It is in strict accordance with his holy law, and its execution is demanded by eternal justice. It has come upon all men; not to come, if they do not repent or reform, for it has come upon all men to condemnation. All men are therefore condemned already, and have been ever since the judgment came, which is nearly six thousand years ago; and it has come upon us who were not then born, and equally on all who are not yet born; for all have sinned in Adam. Every mouth is stopped by the law, and the whole world of mankind are guilty before God.

Now as the nature and effect of the federal relationship of Adam and his posterity has involved all alike in sin, judgment and condemnation, "even so," exactly so, or in the same manner the federal relationship of Christ and his spiritual posterity secures to all the people of God the righteousness of justification of life. On legal principles, if the relation subsisting between Christ and his members was such that Christ could bear their sins in his own body, or that justice could inflict the penalties of the divine law, which were due to our transgressions, on him, then the same relationship must make Christ's obedience to the law, and sufferings under the law, the ground of our justification to life. The law condemned us to death, but the righteousness of Christ's active and passive obedience to the law on our behalf, takes away our guilt, and death as the consequence of guilt, and justifies us to life, as the opposite of death.

In further illustration of this, our apostle continued, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." We have shown that by the offence of Adam, all Adam's posterity are made sinners, judgment has come upon them all to

condemnation. Now taking this as a divine authorized figure, we must unavoidably conclude that the justification unto life of the seed of the second Adam is by virtue of his obedience to the law on their behalf, and the analogy of the figure shows that the same law and divine justice of God, which could behold all the human family in the first Adam, and being in him partakers of the guilt of his disobedience, must with equal clearness behold all the spiritual seed in the second Adam, when he obeyed the law and bore its penalties as partakers in him of his righteousness unto justification of life. We all sinned in Adam, and in Adam we all die, so in Christ all whom God had chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, when he was delivered up for our offences, and bore our sins in his own body on the cross, met the utmost of the penal demands of the law; and when Christ was raised from the dead, we were raised up with him to justification of life. Our perfect justification is therefore not predicated partly on what Christ has done and partly on what his people are to do, but it is by the obedience of one, that is, of Christ, exclusively of anything and everything else, that the saints are made righteous; this is prospective of what shall be by the obedience of one. But if Christ did not fully, effectively and forever purge away all our guilt legally when he died and arose from the dead, this prospect, assurance and certainty that all his children shall be made righteous, experimentally, would be forever cut off.

The atonement was perfect and complete in Jesus Christ our Lord, and in him we were reconciled to God while we were yet sinners in ourselves. But all that was legally fulfilled for us in Christ, shall most certainly be experimentally fulfilled in us individually at the appointed time. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Rom. 5:8-10)

Much confusion and jargon arises with Arminians and Universalists in consequence of their confounding the type and the anti-type, the figure with the thing signified, the shadow with the substance. General or universal atonement is inferred by them from such declarations as those in our text, because they do not perceive that the earthly Adam, as the type, is connected with his own earthly posterity, prefiguring the antitypical Adam and his chosen generation, royal priesthood and holy nation. The type is the natural progenitor of his own race which includes all his natural offspring, and Christ is the head over all things to his church; which, if we admit that by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, we must admit that many sinned in that one man. A man is made up of a body, head and many members. When we say a man breathes, we do not affirm that his hand, feet and all the members of the man respectively inhale and exhale the atmosphere. It is enough that the proper organs convey the vital air into and from the lungs to justify the declaration that the man breathes. Personally, as the respective members of Adam, not one of his posterity was born when we were made sinners by his disobedience to God; and as none are sinners but those who have sinned, the declaration of our text proves that although unborn, we did sin in the disobedience of Adam. So in the application which the apostle makes of the figures to Christ and his seed, as antitypical of Adam and his seed, when Christ obeyed the law his people were so embodied in him that his obedience was our obedience, his death was the very death which the law consigned us to, and when he died for all his people, then were they all dead, and when he arose for their justification, they were all quickened together with him, and raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in him. Legally this was all accomplished when Christ, and all his people in him, died and arose again from the dead, they were legally all made righteous then and there; but our text reads, “So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,” in his body, who is the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

The righteousness of Christ unto justification of life is not held up as a commodity in the market, offered to the highest bidder, nor is it offered conditionally to any, but it is the free gift. It is not offered to, but comes upon all men, that is, all the seed of the antitypical Adam. Free, because it is unconditional, without money, without price. "The gift of God is eternal life," and that gift is free, sovereign and effectual, and where God has sent it, it comes, and where it comes, and on whom it comes, it comes to justification of life. And it is God that justifies, while by the deeds or works of the law, we are positively informed, there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 15, 1861.

ROMANS 12:18-21

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

The solemn and impressive admonitions to the saints with which the New Testament abounds, are never out of season to the children of God, while here in the flesh; for they are continually exposed to temptations, and their carnal nature is as sensitive and resentful of real or of imaginary injuries as they were before they were brought to know and love the Lord. If the spirit of life and holiness which God has graciously implanted in their hearts had destroyed all the corruptions of their depraved nature and purified their fleshly powers, they would not have to lament with Paul, that in their flesh there dwelleth no good thing; nor would they find a law in their members warring against the law of their mind, bringing them into subjection to the law of sin which is in their members. But although these admonitions are always seasonable to christians, there are times when our exposure to temptations render them more peculiarly appropriate and indispensable. When christians enjoy the smiles of the Redeemer, and his love is shed abroad in their hearts, so that they feel willing to make any and every sacrifice for the benefit of their brethren, they cannot so well appreciate the admonition of the apostle against biting and devouring one another, as when the church is involved in discord. The indwelling Spirit of Christ, if we are in possession of it, will tend to assimilate us to his image, and if we have not his Spirit, we are none of his. The corruptions of our carnal nature would make us as we once were, hateful, and hating one another, but if we are led by the Spirit of Christ, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Poor, fallen, depraved nature is, in all respects, opposite to the Spirit of Christ, but the grace of God is given to conform us to his image, that he may be the first-born among many brethren. How is the description given of the condition of man in the Scriptures, of all men, in their alienation from God? There is no exception. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. 3:10-18) And

in the ninth verse of the same chapter, the inspired writer demands, ‘What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.’ This being our nature, as the fallen children of Adam, and that nature still retained in us after our new birth, and found in every saint warring against the Spirit which God has given them in regeneration, how important it is that they should heed the admonition given them, to crucify the old man with its affections and lusts, to keep their body under, and deny themselves of all unrighteousness and worldly lusts, and that they live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world. Circumstanced thus, the text at the head of this article has great importance in pointing out to the saints what should be their constant aim. “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” The very words of the admonition imply that it is not at all times possible to live in peace with all men, for it is also written, “If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution.” But still the words clearly imply that in living peaceably with our fellow-men, there is something in us, as saints, to be called into requisition. Another apostle says, Let none of you suffer as an evil doer, or as busy-bodies in other men’s matters. When strife and discord prevail, and the peace of christians is invaded by its prevalence, let the christian see to it that he is not in whole nor in part the occasion of it. When invaded by wars and persecution, we are to see that we are acting under the Spirit and example of him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; that we recompense to no man, (whether saint or sinner, friend or foe) evil for evil; that we avenge not ourselves, and that we feed our enemy if he hungers, and give him drink if he be thirsty; and leave vengeance and retribution where it rightfully belongs, in the hands of God. This is the course enjoined on all the saints, and if we do not pursue this course, we do not *as much as lieth in us*, live peaceably with all men.

Paul, in writing to Timothy, exhorted, first of all, that supplications and prayers, intercessions and giving thanks, be made for all men, including all rulers who are in authority over us, for this very end, ‘That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.’ (I Tim. 2:2,3)

If in the foregoing remarks we have not mistaken nor misstated the Spirit of Christ as developed in christianity, it must be conceded that none can sustain a legitimate claim to the sacred name of christian who is not governed by the spirit and letter of these admonitions. But if we admit the correctness of this proposition, we virtually ignore the prevailing religion of the present time in our country, if not throughout the world, as false, hypocritical and anti-christian. Apply the rule expressed in our text, with justice to the line, and judgment to the plummet, and reject all professors of godliness as hypocrites, who do not, to the extent of their power, live peaceably with all men, and how few, weighed in this balance of the sanctuary, would not be found wanting. The truth is, all false religion has always been cruel and oppressive, from Cain to the present day, while, on the other hand, the religion of Jesus Christ has as uniformly been marked by its spirit of “Peace on earth and good well toward men,” yea, to all men, enemies as well as friends, sinners as well as saints. As the great Author of all true and vital religion is holy and harmless, and as the wisdom of his government is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy, and by its excellency demonstrating its heavenly origin, so these excellencies must forever characterize those who possess the Spirit of Christ, in the absence of which we are none of his.

Those who are born of God and led by his Spirit do love the saints with an unfeigned love, and above all things desire to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. But they not only love the saints in the bowels of Christ Jesus with pure love fervently, but they desire the best good of all their fellow-beings. Even their enemies share in their benevolent sympathies, and they are heard to pray for them that despitefully use and persecute them, and often reiterate the words of their divine Redeemer,

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” But how is it with those of whom the apostle Jude says, “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain”? Do they, while thirsting for the blood of their fellow-men, give evidence that they have been with Jesus? or that they have learned of him who is meek and lowly, who came not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them? Did Christ, or any of his apostles in their preaching, excite the passions of their hearers, and urge them to shed each other’s blood? Did Paul, Peter or the beloved John, take up contributions of Sharpe’s rifles, or Colt’s revolvers, to arm an excited rabble for the work of violence and blood? Were their pulpits used to arouse the elements of strife, hatred and war? If such a course were compatible with the spirit of the gospel, why were they not so engaged? Were there no slaves held as chattled property by the Romans, by the Jews, and even by the members of their own communion? Most certainly there were, but they had no commission from the Prince of Peace to assail the institution, nor in any other way to mingle in the political strife of the nations of the earth, but were to live peaceably, as much as in them lay, with all men. They were themselves frequently persecuted most cruelly, whipped, imprisoned, disfranchised, robbed, stoned, tortured and put to death by their enemies, whose religion, like that of modern days, could feast on blood. But in all this they adhered strictly to the admonitions of our text, without making any attempt to avenge themselves, much less to excite brother to stain his hands in brother’s blood.

The abomination that maketh desolate, spoken of by the prophet, even now standeth where it ought not. If, for the defence of nations, war, as a necessity, be unavoidable, the place appropriate for its consideration is in the government of the world, not in the house of God, or in that which claims to be the church or temple of the Lord. When, therefore, the sacred name of christianity and the altar of the professed church of God are desecrated by the war whoop, and prayers are offered up to speed the cannon ball, and to hurry on the work of slaughter, the Deity, whom they profess to invoke, is insulted, and his holy name blasphemed. We could give many specimens of such heaven-daring blasphemies which have been copied from the lips of our blood-thirsty clergy, but such blasphemies are so common that they have become familiar to all, and our design is only now to hold up to our readers the contrast between that kind of religion which feasts on blood, which delights in murder, and the holy religion of the Son of God.

Our design in this article is especially for the benefit of the children of God. When the abomination that maketh desolate standeth in the holy place (usurping the holy altars of religion), then let him that readeth understand, let him take timely warning, to touch not, taste not, handle not, to be in no way or shape involved in exciting men to deeds of carnage; but rather, so far as we have opportunity, let us display the banner of love, and, as much as lieth in us, live peaceably with all men. Our warfare is not, as christians, against flesh and blood; our holy religion forbids that we shall injure the persons or the property of our fellow-men, directly or indirectly, by our influence or example. Let our prayers ascend to God, who ruleth the raging elements, that we may be delivered from the horrors of war, and learn to beat our swords into plow-shares and our spears into pruning-hooks, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Middletown, N. Y.,
September 1, 1861.

PSALM 97:1,2

“The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.”

“When overwhelmed with grief,
My heart within me dies,
Helpless, and far from all relief,
To heaven I lift mine eyes.

O! lead me to the Rock
That’s high above my head;
And make the covert of thy wings,
My shelter and my shade.”

Despairing as we must of finding substantial joys or lasting happiness on earth, it is consoling to those who know and love the Lord, when they can turn aside from the perplexing cares and distracting turmoil of earth, and in peaceful seclusion from noise and strife, by faith look up to him who has entered for us within the veil, and contemplate the eternal perfections of our Savior God, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, whose dwelling is also in the humble and contrite hearts of those who fear his name. While strife and bitter hate marks and mars the character of men, the ruthless wars are drenching the earth with rivers of human gore, while brother in fratricidal strife seeks the life-blood of his brother, and while the general clamor of kindred and relatives tax all their energies to darken the dreadful scene around us; what would become of us, if there were no over-ruling hand to curb the deadly violence, and bid the maddening tempest cease to howl?

Often when sweet peace has smiled upon us, and all things have seemed to contribute to our comfort, have we looked forward to the grand and terrible scene, which will assuredly come, when the earth and skies shall pass away – when the sun in the heavens shall be put out and cease to shine, and when death and hell shall deliver up their dead – and in the contemplation, we have felt convinced that there is nothing short of the blessed assurance that the great and glorious God, at whose bidding the uprising nations of the dead shall come forth, who is our Father and our God, could possibly allay the terror of the contemplation.

Having hope in God, which is sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil; – a hope so full of immortality that we can contemplate with joy the coming of the great day, when our God shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know him not, and to be admired in all who love his appearing, can we not, by the same faith in God, meet the cheerless conflicts of this mortal state, and even amid the dread confusion of war, and the clash of arms, the booming of cannon, and the death-cry of the slaughtered victims of the battlefield, be still and know that Jehovah is God. There are times when the faith of God’s people is severely tried, in regard to his supreme control of all events – when the turbulent passions of men seem unrestrained – when the wicked rise and spread themselves like the green bay tree; – when God’s holy name is blasphemed, his law transgressed, his truth opposed and derided, his people persecuted, and when the ways of Zion mourn, and doubting, we enquire:

“Is there a God who hears and sees
The things below the skies?”

But with the Psalmist we are at length constrained to acknowledge. “This is my infirmity.” Our infirmity and imperfections conceal from us his hand in turning and overturning, and causing the wrath of man to praise him, and in restraining their wrath to such limits as he has wisely appointed. Truly God is his own interpreter, and until he makes known to us his boundless wisdom and power, his ways are past finding out. But still, although our unbelief so often assaults our faith, there is a fixed conviction in our minds, that the Lord God omnipotent doth reign, and this conviction affords us consolation.

The Lord reigneth. Having all wisdom to direct and all power to accomplish, his government is absolute and sovereign, he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. No higher law can possibly exist in heaven or earth than the will of God. It cannot be improved, for it is perfect and holy in all respects, and all the saints on earth and glorified spirits in heaven pray, “Thy will be done.” Not because they doubt that it will be done, but because God’s own spirit helpeth our infirmities, and knoweth what is the will of God, and therefore maketh intercession for us, according to his will, with groanings that we cannot utter. That will, though higher than the heavens, and broader than eternity, perfectly comprehends the smallest, as it does the greatest objects that exist. From the vaulted heavens to the deepest earth, and from the mightiest angels to the minutest insect, it directs the destiny of all. The sparrow in its flight – and the numbered hairs upon our heads are all secured in being and in destiny by the will of God. In the execution of his will, the Lord reigneth. Not as some impiously represent, that he attempts to reign, or wants to reign. But with irresistible power and might his purpose stands and he does all his pleasure. He speaks the word, and it stands fast; he commands, and it is done. He is of one mind and none can turn him.

“He looks and ten thousand of angels rejoice,
And myriads wait for his word;
He speaks – and eternity filled with his voice,
Re-echoes the praise of her Lord.”

When we contemplate the infinite and eternal perfections of Jehovah, contrasted with the highest attributes or attainments of mortals, to bear the government; we have the greatest reason to reiterate the language of the inspired Psalmist, “Let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.” Let them rejoice that the absolute government of events are not left with finite beings. All their powers are limited, and under the providential government of God himself. His prescience can clearly foresee all the events that time can possibly develop, and his wisdom is sufficient to provide for all emergencies. He is capable of holding the end of all things with the beginning. No lapse of ages, or intervening contingencies can becloud his omniscient vision, or hide the smallest particle of creation, or the most trivial circumstance from his view. Possessing all knowledge, all wisdom, and all goodness, how important that he should govern and control all things.

“Chain'd to his throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men;
With every angel’s size and form,
Drawn by the eternal pen.

His Providence unfolds the Book,
And makes his counsel known;
Each opening leaf, and every stroke,
Fulfills some deep design.”

We are filled with amazement while we trace his government in nature. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament his handy work. The regularity in which each heavenly body moves is in obedience to his decrees. Seed time and harvest, winters and summers, days and nights, respond with the most exact precision to the orders of his throne. And can we doubt that in the history of mankind – their rise and fall – their present and future destiny – are bounded by his all-wise decree? We can no more doubt his providential supervision of all the affairs of men and angels, than we can doubt his very existence. And we know that he exists, because we exist; and we could have no existence if he did not exist. And it is equally clear that he reigns, as it is that he exists; for no power inferior to that which created the universe could possibly sustain it one moment, and in this also we have cause for joy and gratitude.

Early as the entrance of sin, and the fall of man, was a Savior promised – and how could a promise be made, requiring four thousand of years for its fulfillment, with any degree of certainty, if he who made the promise had not a full control of all the events which were necessary for its fulfillment? Or how could he “Declare the end from the beginning, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” if he did not hold the reigns of universal government in his own almighty grasp?

But while we are constrained to confess the power and absolute government of God – we have also to acknowledge our utter inability to comprehend his universal government. His footsteps are in the mighty deep; and his ways are past finding out. High as the heavens are raised above the earth, so are God’s ways and thoughts higher than the ways and thoughts of men – for

“Clouds and darkness are round about him.”

Our vision is too weak and feeble to gaze upon the unveiled glory of the eternal God. Look we, which way we may, the impenetrable cloud conceals the dazzling splendor of his glory; or we should be consumed. He keepeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it. Before, behind, on his right hand and on his left, the intervening cloud conceals from human sight the insufferable splendor of his eternal throne. O, where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” Yet, notwithstanding the impenetrable darkness which hides his person and his government from human scrutiny, the faith of the Son of God, implanted in his quickened saints, is permitted to view the bow which God has, by his spirit, disclosed upon that cloud. And the darker the cloud appears to our natural vision, the brighter does the bow present its living beauties to our faith, giving us the most joyful assurance that “*Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of his throne.*”

The depravity of our nature inclines us to question the righteousness of the divine government, because from our eyes the cloud conceals the wisdom, majesty and holiness of God. But while the infidelity of our fallen nature doubts and disputes the righteousness of divine government; and we murmur, complain, find fault, and rebel; the assurance is unmistakably given that righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. His throne signifies his power and dominion, and that power and dominion is founded in righteousness and judgment, and therefore can never depart from the immutable principles of righteousness, however dark and mysterious his government may seem to our reason. Sometimes we are subjected to trials which seem to us to bear no impress of the judgment, or decree of God, and we are perhaps inclined to attribute them to chance, or to some cause over which the throne of God bears no control; but however wrongly we may judge, all that concerns us for time or eternity must be controlled by the righteousness and judgment in which the eternal throne of God is founded.

When smiling mercy bestrewn our pathway with every desirable blessing, the throne from which our mercies proceed is to our eyes involved in darkness, and we enquire, "How can God bestow such mercies upon us consistently with his eternal perfections, when we are so very sinful, ungrateful, and undeserving? Again when he recalls these mercies, our gourds are blasted, our comforts dashed, our dearest treasures torn from our fond embrace, the darkness of his cloud hides from our view the gracious hand of our kind and covenant God, and again we cry out in amazement: Lord why is this

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his works in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

Middletown, N.Y,
October 1, 1861.

I TIMOTHY 5:24,25

Friend Beebe: Please give your views on I Timothy 5:24,25, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." By so doing you will oblige a sincere inquirer after truth.

Your friend in tribulation,
J. Childers.
Drake Co., Ohio,
Sept. 21, 1861.

REPLY

This chapter abounds with practical rules to be observed by Timothy in the discharge of his pastoral duties in the church of God, in which he was an ordained bishop (or elder). Among other instructions he is cautioned against laying hands suddenly on any man. That is, if we rightly understand, in setting them apart to the office of elders, deacons or other responsible places in the church. To avoid premature ordinations, it would be necessary to form a judgment in regard to the prospective proclivities of candidates for ordination. Let these first be proved, and when the church becomes satisfied that they possess the proper qualifications, let them be set apart to the work, by prayer, fasting and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. But be not hasty. There are perceptible indications which, if judiciously watched, will enable the church and the presbytery to judge even beforehand whether the assignment would be beneficial. Some men, even in the church, are by no means qualified for the office of pastor or deacon, their failings or sins may be anticipated. For instance, if the candidate for the ministry be a *novice*, his prospective sin is that being lifted up with pride, he will fall into the condemnation of the devil. The church and the presbytery must judge in this matter beforehand. Or if he be given to too much wine, or in his natural disposition greedy of filthy lucre, or passionate, a striker, one who is not able to rule well his own house, we are not at liberty to lay hands on him, but from these evidences we are to judge of him beforehand. The evil consequences which would result from their being installed in

the sacred office are open, and need not that time or trial be given, for the consequence is so open and apparent that it may be judged beforehand. The bishop, for instance, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach. In the absence of these qualifications, we may righteously and scripturally judge beforehand, that his future, if set apart to the work, would be unprofitable, and hazardous to the peace of the church. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand, for, if we find them in possession of all the requisites named in the third chapter of this epistle, we may judge beforehand that his ministry will be edifying, comforting, instructing and every way beneficial to the church of God.

Some have understood the apostle to mean that the sins of God's elect people have gone to judgment before death, and that the sins of the non-elect follow to judgment, and are not judged until after death and the resurrection, but we do not understand this to be the subject on which the inspired apostle was in this text, or its connection, instructing Timothy. We do believe that the sins of all God's people were as fully known, and adjudged by God before the world began as they are or will be at any subsequent period. And further, they are judicially judged, summed up, and laid upon Christ when God laid on him the iniquity of all his people; and experimentally, when they were first quickened with spiritual life and arraigned before their eternal Judge, in their first convictions for sin. We also believe that all the wicked deeds of men and devils were known unto God from everlasting, and that the final destiny of both saints and sinners is unchangeably fixed in the purpose and wisdom of the divine mind as it will ever be. But still, to our mind, the text under consideration does not relate to that subject, but, as we have endeavored to show, to the judgment of the church and of the presbytery in regard to those on whom hands should or should not be laid in solemn ordination, as elders, deacons, etc.

Middletown, N. Y.,
October 15, 1861.

REVELATION 22:14

Dear Brother Beebe: – Will you gratify me, your unworthy brother, by giving your views on Rev. 22:14? *“blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”* More particularly on the *city*. What city? Where is it? And when do we enter it?

Yours, as ever,
Hiram Campbell.
Brunswick, Maine, Oct. 31, 1861.

REPLY: The names and description of the city as given in the connection, leave no room to doubt that the city mentioned in our text, is the holy city, New Jerusalem, which descended from God out of heaven, and is a presentation of the church of the living God, which is also called the bride, the Lamb's wife. It is also called the tabernacle of God, with men, in which God dwells, owning the citizens as his people and manifesting himself to them as their God; wiping away the tears from their eyes, and shielding them from sorrow, crying, pain and death. In this case we have a singular combination and blending of figures. A city, a bride, a wife, a tabernacle, etc., all of which are elsewhere in the

Scriptures used to represent the church of God in her union with and subjection to our Lord Jesus Christ. We should not forget that figures familiar to us are employed by the Spirit to set forth and illustrate to us things of a spiritual and heavenly character. The figure of a city presents the subjects of grace as a congregation of the Lord, in their congregational capacity, as fellow-citizens in the church or city of God, and of the household of faith, and all under the regulations of a well disciplined community, under the same government, protected by the same walls and bulwarks which fortify and defend all who have the privilege of citizenship. And in this city are the common provisions which are so amply provided, for meat and drink, for light and comfort, for protection and safety. In this city the laws of naturalization exclude dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie; admitting only those who are blessed of the Lord, and who as a manifest evidence that they are blessed, cheerfully take Christ's yoke on them, and show their allegiance to him by doing his commandments. As he said, Then are ye my disciples indeed, if ye do whatsoever I command you: and for a more manifest token to all, if they obey his new commandment: for, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. As citizens they all have certain rights of citizenship, such as the right to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the street of the city, and on either side of the river, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month; the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Instead of being forbidden and kept back from the tree of life by the cherubim and flaming sword, which turneth every way to keep the way of the tree of life, as under the legal dispensation, in the earthly paradise, or in the Jerusalem which is in bondage with her children, in this New Jerusalem all who are written among the living in Jerusalem, whose names are registered in the book of life, have a right to the tree of life, and to the pure river of water of life, which is clear as crystal, which proceedeth out of the throne of God and the Lamb. For unto all such the Spirit and the bride saith, Come, and they have the privilege of taking of the water of life freely. While as citizens they are a multitude which no man can number, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, they all make but one bride, one church, one body. For ye are all one in Jesus Christ. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. Here then is identity, Christ himself is the Head of the body, the church, and the church is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. As the bride of Christ, her creation was in him, as the creation of Eve, in the figure, was in Adam. She is one with him, They twain shall be one. Bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh; and she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. She is not merely the bride, but the married wife of the Lamb. For thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer is the holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. The testimony of John the Baptist, when he identified and pointed out the Husband, saying, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, was, He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom standeth and rejoiceth because of the bridegroom's voice; thus my joy is fulfilled. This city is the city of God, and Ezekiel says, (48:35) The name of the city shall be, The Lord is There. And God has said, by Isaiah, And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord. And thou shalt be called sought out, a city not forsaken (Isaiah 62:12).

From this last mentioned passage we learn that the city is composed of the redeemed of the Lord, whom the Lord has not only redeemed, but whom he has sought out; he found this people as he did Jacob, in a waste-howling wilderness, and led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of his eye. These are redeemed from among men, out of every kindred and tribe of mankind, and they are redeemed to God, and made priests and kings, and they shall reign with Christ on the earth. They shall all of them come with singing to Zion, the holy city, and they shall sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and they shall sing this song, We have a strong city; salvation

will God appoint for walls and for bulwarks. God himself is a wall of fire round about, and the glory in her midst. This is the city of which God has said, Here will I dwell forever; for I have desired it for an habitation. He will abundantly bless her provisions, and fill her poor with bread. The Lord God is her Sun and her Shield; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God will help her, and that right early. Truly, glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God: not one of her stakes shall ever be removed, not one of her cords shall ever be broken.

“Her ancient walls appear to be
The workmanship of Deity.
Founded in grace, they still appear,
Without a flaw or chasm there.

Oft has this city’s strength been tried
By mighty foes on every side;
But all in vain it yet hath been,
She baffles Satan, hell and sin.

Count ye her towers, how high they rise,
Her golden spires, they reach the skies;
Her golden streets are fair to view,
Her palaces and bulwarks, too.

Then round her walk, her turrets tell,
Mark all her brazen bulwarks well;
Spread far and wide her deathless fame,
Her pearly gates, and walls of flame.”

Much more might be written in answer to the first inquiry of brother Campbell, What city? But we trust enough has been said to show that we understand the city mentioned (Rev. 22:14) to be the holy city, New Jerusalem, which John saw in his vision, coming down from God out of heaven, and which he describes in and throughout the last two chapters of the New Testament, and which is designed to describe her in her glory organization and primitive purity, as the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Second. Where is it? We reply, it is where two or three are gathered together in Christ’s name. It is in all places where God has revealed his name. It is in the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. Of her locality the psalmist has said, Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north. Her locality is marked by stakes that shall never be removed, and confined by cords that shall never be broken. The sacred records of eternity show that God has been her dwelling-place in all generations. She dwells in the secret place of the Most High, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty. Her life is hid with Christ in God. Her place of defence is the munitions of rocks. The eternal God is her refuge, and underneath her are the everlasting arms. We find her in the eternal, immutable love of God; she is found in his decrees, wrapped up in the bundle of eternal life, which is in his Son. She has her place in the eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in himself before the world began; which purpose shall unshaken remain when the world shall be no more. She is found in the election of grace, chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world. She has her standing in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and in his justifying righteousness she outshines the sun, is

more fair than the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. She inhabits the Rock, is in the secret places of the stairs, and she sits in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

But in regard to the house of her pilgrimage, God has chosen her in the furnace of affliction. In this world she has tribulation, but in Christ she has peace. The place assigned her by the world is as the offscouring of all things, unto this day. Hated by the world, tried and tempted by the devil, opposed by the flesh, a jest and a byword to all the children of the bondwoman. But her home is in Jesus Christ, and in the earth she has no abiding place or continuing city. As to her sorrows, trials, persecutions, and her triumphs and victories, she is sometimes encompassed about by the armies of God and Magog; but sometimes she is seen upon Mount Zion, with the seal of God indelibly marked in her forehead, or on the sea of glass, which is mingled with fire, singing a song which none but the redeemed can learn or sing. She has had a place prepared for her in the wilderness, to be nourished and protected from the serpent. Whatever of sorrow, affliction, persecution or tribulation may be appointed for her here below, she has the assurance that she shall ultimately triumph through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony. For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Third. When do we enter the city? As we view the whole church of God, existing in Christ, and chosen in him before the foundation of the world, according to Eph. 1:4, we regard the citizens as natives of the holy city. Sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus and called (Jude 1). Who hath saved us and called us with an 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. 1:9). Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26). And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there (Psalms 87:5,6). Judicially the saints entered when they were quickened together with Christ, in his resurrection, when they were raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places. For they are risen with Christ and are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:24-26).

But in what we regard as the immediate sense of the text proposed (Rev. 22:14), the saints come when they do his commandments; and thereby manifest that they are the blessed of the Lord. This coming in through the gates is an experimental matter. Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God; and, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). The city in which the tree of life yields her fruits is a spiritual city, and can only be entered by the gates which are called Praise (Isa. 60:18). The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Psa. 87:2). David says, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." (Psa.122:1-4) As the tribes of Israel went up to the Old Jerusalem to worship, and entered the city by the gates of that city, so the tribes of the Lord go through the gates of the New Jerusalem, experimentally in their devotion, to worship the Lord in his holy temple in the spiritual Jerusalem. As the names of the tribes of Israel are written on the angels of the gates (Rev. 21:12), we learn that the ministry of praise, embracing gospel experience, gospel doctrine and ordinances, and all gospel privileges, belong to the tribes of the Lord, to the children of God, and to them exclusively. The gates of Zion which are called Praise, are used to signify wisdom, honor, power,

counsel and peculiar privileges. And when the hearts of God's people are led by the Spirit in their heavenly exercises of worship and praise, they enter into the spiritual privileges of the kingdom, into the counsels of wisdom, and contemplate the glory of their Redeemer's kingdom, and talk of his power. "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 which keepeth the truth may enter in." (Isa. 26:1,2) The gates of the holy city are only open to the righteous nation, for who else can enter by the gates of Praise? They are not accessible to those who love and make a lie, but to the righteous nation that keepeth the truth.

"Those holy gates forever bar
Pollution, sin and shame,
None shall obtain admittance there,
But followers of the Lamb."

"Blessed are they that do his commandments." The commandments of him who says in the preceding verse, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Who also says, in verse sixteen, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." He is the King of Righteousness, the King eternal, and our only wise God and Savior. His commands are proclaimed from his throne in the holy city, and are applicable to all who are under law to Christ. Their faith and obedience are the evidences that they are his disciples, and that they have a right to the tree of life, and to enter into their peculiar privileges through the gates of the city; for the gates are open to the righteous continually, and his blessed people who know the joyful sound of his voice, shall go in and out and find pasture. They have right to the tree of life, and eat of its fruits freely, and live forever: for their right is a birthright, it is their inheritance, and it is their Father's good pleasure that they shall inherit the kingdom. There is a manifest entering into the holy city, by the gate of christian recognition and fellowship, not only when the new born babes in Christ declare in Zion what God has done for them, and when they publicly espouse his cause and take on them the profession of his name, and by the gate of baptism, declare their allegiance to Jesus as their King.

Finally, whenever the saints are enabled to worship God in the spirit, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh, in their social songs of praise, their prayers and supplications, in their love and fellowship, union and communion, in walking in the ordinances and order, the doctrine, discipline of the house of God, then we conclude they enter in through the gates, and enjoy their right to the tree of life.

We have been somewhat lengthy in our remarks, and perhaps have failed to meet the wishes of brother Campbell, but if any of our readers are edified or comforted in what we have written, our labor will not be in vain.

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 1, 1861



PSALMS 42:5

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance.” Psa. 42:5.

The inspired Psalmist and sweet singer of Israel, like all the children of God, was subject to seasons of great depression of spirit. There were times with him, as with us, when he could attune his harp to strains of joy and gladness – when he could sing, “Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.” His mountain stood so firmly at times that he felt assured that he should never be moved. But when the presence of his God was withheld he was in trouble. Then in the plaintive notes of this Psalm he was reduced to great distress, and many tears. Though elevated to the regal honors of a throne, with thousands of waiting attendants to execute his orders, with wealth at his command, he could not be happy without the manifest presence of the Lord. His case was like the panting hart in the desert, panting for the water brooks – and famishing with thirst; so did his soul pant after God. Observe the striking figure. The panting hart has but one object in view; he must drink or die. Nothing but water will meet the necessity of his case. And it is even thus with the Christian. He says, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee.” How intense must be the desire of the child of God, when constrained to cry out, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God. My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?” As though to aggravate the woe of the disconsolate saints, the enemy seems ever ready to tauntingly sneer at them. And how keenly is the tempter’s malice felt when he suggests to the troubled soul that his confidence in God is misplaced; that God will not deliver, that he will not listen to their prayer – is unmoved by their supplications – that his mercy is clean gone for ever more, and he will no more be gracious. A saint in this condition cannot refrain from praying, though he may not be able to express in words the groanings of his spirit; yet the language of his heart is, When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy days. The remembrance of former joys, of social seasons of worship at the house of God, the privileges of the sanctuary, cause the tears to flow the more freely.

“We wept when we remembered Zion.”

“Where my best friends, my kindred dwell,
Where God, my Savior reigns.”

But Satan avaunt! My faith revives; a ray of light breaks in; my fainting heart lays hold of hope, and listens to the words of faith. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Perhaps the soul responds, How can I be cheerful under such trying circumstances. My Savior’s face is hidden from my view. I am thirsting, panting, fainting to behold the light of his countenance. I am sorely tempted and fear that I shall enjoy his presence no more; I have sought him, but I could not find him. I called him, but he gave me no answer. Oh that I knew where I might find him; but I am driven almost to despair. I have poured out my soul in me, in vain supplication and prayer; my tears have been my food. My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. “My heart is smitten and withered as grass, so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; and like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me: for I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping; because of thine indignation and thy wrath; for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.” In whom can I now trust; who shall now bear up my hope? “Hope thou in God,” says faith, for

I shall yet praise him. Notwithstanding all my fears, my doubts, my unbelief, and bitter lamentations I shall yet praise him; but not as the result of any effort of my own, or any help which can come from any other source but God. Hope thou in God, not in man; not in thy self, nor in thy cries, or tears, or prayers, but in God, for he is the Hope of Israel, and the Savior thereof in the time of trouble. He hears thy mourning voice, he knows the sorrows of thy troubled soul, and he has pledged his word that he will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

“If through the deep waters he calls thee to go,
The rivers of wo shall not thee overflow;
For he will be with thee thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee, thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
His grace all sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not bum thee, his only design –
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.”

I shall yet praise him. Well, that is a most blessed assurance; for I had feared that I should no more enjoy that blessed privilege. Surely I can ask no more. I shall yet praise him, not only for his electing love, his boundless goodness, and his saving grace, for the unspeakable gift of his dear Son; for my redemption from sin, death, and hell; for a Savior’s righteousness; for my complete justification in his sight; my calling, my new birth – my translation from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son; but I shall also praise him for the help of his countenance. O what an efficient help to me is his blessed countenance.

“In darkest shades, if he appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul’s sweet Morning Star,
And he’s my rising Sun.”

When his countenance is hidden from my view I sink down in sadness, sorrow, and grief, and there is nothing else can cheer me. But whatever trial, or tribulation I may be involved in, if his beaming countenance be revealed to me, I can rush through a troop, or leap over a wall; yea, though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, if he be with me, and I can see his countenance. I will fear no evil, for his rod and his staff, they comfort me. His countenance is as the sun shineth in his strength. And his brightness is as the light. And God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in the hearts of his children to give the light of the glory of God in the face, or countenance of our Lord Jesus Christ. What floods of living light and joy and comfort flow from his as the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings. In his presence, or in the light of his countenance, is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Then let me praise him for the help of his countenance, by which I am delivered from the power of darkness, and ushered into his marvelous light.

“*I shall yet praise him.*” O what a change, from the deeps of affliction, from distress, temptation, sorrow, grief, and pain, raised up by the help of his countenance, to mingle *my* joyful notes of praise, with glorified spirits round his throne.

“He will arise and plead my cause,
Nor will my Lord delay,
Beyond th' appointed hour of grace.
That long expected day.”

I shall yet praise him, with the congregation of his saints within the walls of his sanctuary here; but when my voice shall falter in death, and *my* spirit wing its way up to the paradise of God, I shall see him as he is, and behold his countenance without a veil between – in more heavenly strains shall I praise him, forever.

“There we shall see his face,
And never, never sin;
There from the rivers of his grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 1, 1861.

SOLOMON'S SONG 2:15

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.”

Vines are often mentioned in the inspired Scriptures in a figurative manner, and the figure is used in the illustration of a variety of doctrinal, experimental and practical subjects. In John 15:1-18, our Lord Jesus Christ applies the figure to himself, saying, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman,” etc., and in this application, showing the vital relationship of the branches with the vine, and their dependence on the vine for life, vigor and fruitfulness, and strikingly setting forth the impossibility of his members glorifying God in the production of fruit, except they abide in him. “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 false church or churches are compared to vines, but “their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their vine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.” (Deut. 32:32,33.) But the church of God is also frequently brought to view in the Scriptures under the figure of a vine, a vineyard, etc., as in the eightieth Psalm, “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.” “Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.” “Sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” (Isa. 27:2,3.) We might multiply references to passages both in the Old and New Testaments where this figure is applied to the church of God as a vine of his own hand's planting, but in this Song the figure is so frequently used that we can safely rely upon its application to the church of

God, in the text which we have under consideration. Foxes are a wild, cunning and mischievous animal, and greatly to be dreaded in the culture of vines, not so much from their power or disposition to destroy vines, as for their thievish disposition to rob them, by stealing the grapes. The saints are represented as being deeply interested in the prosperity of the vine, as representing the church, and their spiritual privileges in the church, and their vigilant watchfulness to guard against every influence that is prejudicial to the prosperity of the church. By foxes we presume all enemies of the cause of God and truth maybe intended, as our Lord called Herod a fox, but the charge in our text is more especially in reference to the little foxes that spoil, or rob the vine, by depredations on the tender grapes. Herod was not a little fox, and his object seemed to be not merely to rob or spoil the vine, but if possible to destroy it, root and branch. We are not sure that we understand the precise meaning of the little foxes in the figurative import of the text, but we will assume that it is intended to signify all such things or influences in and about the church as are calculated to prevent the fruitfulness, and mar the beauty of the church of God. Not only disorderly members, including hypocrites, false professors, and those of God's children who walk disorderly, are like foxes in despoiling the church of much of her beauty, vigor and fruitfulness, if they be not taken, or arrested in their pernicious course by the discipline of the house of God, but there are some foxes which seem to be so small as to cause but little or no apprehension by those who are keepers of the vineyard until they have done immense damage to the tender grapes. For instance, pride, arrogance, selfishness, jealousy, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, whisperings, back-bitings, envies, negligence, disobedience, indifference, worldly mindedness and self-gratification. Has any christian church or vine ever existed long in any place without being molested with some little foxes of this description, more fatal to the peace and harmony of the church than Samson's three hundred foxes were to the Philistines' standing corn?

If we may regard the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, against which there is no law, if these be the tender grapes which cluster on the vigorous vine, are not the works of the flesh, as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like, the foxes which spoil the tender grapes?

But what shall we do to protect the vine and the clusters of tender grapes? Say some, "Let us shoot them, or stone them." But our text says, "Take us the foxes," etc. If we shoot or stone them, we may miss our mark, and only wound the vine. Let us beware that our zeal to destroy the foxes does not itself become a fox, and a very sly one, too, to hurt the tender grapes which we attempt to protect. Take them. How shall we take them? The idea seems to be that we are to detect them, and in such a way as shall not hurt the vine nor the oil, the vine nor the clusters. When Samson took his three hundred foxes we suppose he had some way of entrapping them without violence, and so if the word of truth dwells richly in our hearts, and we walk in the Spirit and do not fulfill the lusts or desires of the flesh, it is fair to believe we shall detect and take nearly all of these little foxes.

Our application of the figure of foxes may seem speculative, but could we take, that is, detect and arrest, all the works of the flesh which war against the Spirit in and about the church of God, shall we have any farther occasion to fear from the depredation of foxes? For who or what shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? If ye be led by the Spirit, ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. It is the candid opinion of the writer of this article that the little foxes which spoil or rob the vine, do burrow in the earthly nature of the children of God. Then if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, or if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off, or

“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’re that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship none but thee.”

Whether we have correctly applied the figure in our text or not, we will not pretend to say, but we feel confident that there are foxes little and big, of the kind which we have described, and we would wish every child of God were a Nimrod, or mighty hunter before the Lord, to take the foxes, and to protect the tender grapes.

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 1, 1861.

HEBREWS 9:27

Brother Beebe: – If not too much trouble, I would like to read your views on Hebrews 9:27. If death is the penalty of the law, how could it precede judgment? This may seem to show weakness in me, which I know is so, but please excuse.

Yours in bonds of love,
John Nosler.
Winterset, Iowa, Oct. 27, 1861.

REPLY

The text reads thus: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” The sentence is not perfect without the next verse, as follows: 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.”

If we consider the general mortality of the human family to be here intended, we should understand the demise or death of our earthly bodies, which is clearly an appointment of God. As he said to man, “For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” And again: “For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Regarding the execution of this sentence, as the penalty of the law of God, here was clearly a judgment preceding the execution of the penalty. And Paul says, Rom. 5:17, 18, “For if by one man’s offence 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. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Thus we see that the infliction of death is the execution of judgment, and this judgment by the stern decree of God has become an appointment, extending to men, and to all men, as death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. This judgment however passed on all men from the date of the first transgression, “In the day,” he ate of the forbidden fruit. But the Scriptures speak *of a judgment to come*. By which however we do not understand that God has not already adjudicated the case of all the human family, and fixed their everlasting destiny, for he is of one mind, and none can turn him. But the term judgment, in its scriptural sense, as relating to God’s judgments, means the execution of the penalties of his law. Hence we read, He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him; and of some at least it is written, ‘Whose

judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” Hence when the inspired writers speak of a judgment that shall take place after the death of our mortal bodies, we understand the execution of the righteous decrees of the eternal Judge, even as the decree of God now stands and hath forever stood. We cannot, without disparaging thoughts of God, suppose him less capable to adjudicate the state of all men before the world began, than he will be when the world shall be no more. Can we conceive that he has learned anything that he did not always know; how then could he declare the end from the beginning, which he says he has done? Nor could there possibly be any less of equity, righteousness, or purity in his decisions maturely existing in his mind before, than subsequently to the existence of this world.

Paul speaks of an appointed day, when God will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath appointed; but he also tells us that this judgment shall be according to my gospel. Not on some new plan, law, or the development of something new to him. The judgment of all, both saints and sinners, is recorded in the Scriptures, just as it shall be executed. The wicked shall receive the judgment now in store for them, when God shall turn them into hell with the nations which know him not, and the saints shall also receive the judgments or what God has already decreed for them, when they shall be raised up from the dead in incorruption to be forever with the Lord.

But although we have thus written our views on the subject of the final judgment of the last day, we cannot understand the text proposed by our brother to be treating on the subject. The whole connection shows the inspired writer engaged in illustrating the Mediatorial work of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and in regard to how he was once offered to bear the sins of many. Now if brother Nosier will observe the figure used in the tenth and eleventh verses of this chapter, he will, if we mistake not, find the key to this text. “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” The law of testaments then in requiring the testator’s death to give validity to the will, recognizes the appointment unto men once to die, and once dying is sufficient to make his will or testament perfectly valid. So Christ was once offered, not as Moses required the frequent offering of sacrifices, and shedding of blood under the Levitical priesthood, but he was once offered to bear the sins of many. How? As it is appointed unto men once to die, in order that their testament shall have force. Well, when a man has made his last will and testament, the document remains without strength until he, the testator, is dead. Then the testament is brought into the proper court for judgment, and upon the establishment of the facts which prove first that this is the last will and testament of the testator, and that the testator is dead, judgment is legally pronounced, the testament is judged, recognized and comes in full force. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. Justice and law received the offering, and acknowledge the force and validity of the will, and therefore the heirs identified in his testament look for the complete execution of the will of the testator. And as the will of the testator in this testament was to bear the sins of many, and to put away their sins by the sacrifice of himself, this will is established beyond all controversy, and therefore to the saints, for none others are looking for him to appear in the glory of his resurrection, and triumph over death, hell and sin, nor do they look in vain, for unto them he shall appear the second time, but not with all our sins laying upon him, and law and justice still demanding the payment, for having put away sin, and all the sins which he bore, and all the iniquities of his people which were laid on him, he shall appear without sin, unto salvation. He dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. He has the keys of death and hell. To them who look for him he shall appear, it cannot be otherwise, and they shall see him as he is, holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens; and what is more wonderful, is that when he shall appear, they shall be like him, for whom Jehovah did foreknow,

them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. The enraptured psalmist could sing, and so can all who are looking for him, and who love his appearing, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.”

“O glorious hour! O blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God;
And flesh and sense no more control
The rising pleasures of my soul.
My flesh shall slumber in the ground,
‘Till the last trumpet’s joyful sound,
Then burst her bands in sweet surprise,
And in my Savior’s image rise.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 1, 1861.

ACTS 17:27

Elder Beebe: – Please give your views on Acts 17:27. “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.”
Rodham Tubes.

REPLY

It is sometimes less difficult to tell what a passage does not mean than to demonstrate dearly its precise import. This text with its immediate connection is often brought forward by the advocates of free-will, free-agency, and conditional salvation to prove that all mankind are capable of, are called upon to seek the Lord, and to repent, etc., as conditions on which the Lord has promised to remit their sins, and save them. We are abundantly prepared to controvert such a perversion of the text, first by the express declaration of the Scriptures, that salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast, that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God. That it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior. That being justified by his grace (not by our will or works), we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life. And Paul’s hope of eternal life was based on the promise which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

Secondly. Because that repentance which is unto life is the gift of God, and cannot be obtained from any other source than from him whom God has exalted to be a Prince and a Savior; to give repentance unto Israel and the forgiveness of sins. And as to seeking after God, in any saving sense, the same apostle, who uttered the words of our text, on Mars’ Hill in Athens, has proved from the Scriptures that, “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” (Rom. 3:10,11 compared with Psa. 14:2,3, and Isa. 9:4-8.) The total incompetency of unregenerate sinners to seek God in any spiritual sense is proved by the declaration that the natural man

receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned. (I Cor. 2:14) Also, John 3:3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Men who cannot know the things of the spirit cannot be qualified to seek after God who is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and invisible, and whom no man by searching can find out. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." (I Cor. 2:11) These scriptures very clearly prove the negative of what is asserted by will-worshippers, and Arminians, as to the import of Paul's address to the idolatrous Athenians. But we have now to search for the true meaning of the apostle's address.

Let us remember that we are not at liberty to adopt any exposition of the scriptures, which would involve the scriptures themselves in contradiction. Whenever we arrive at the true sense of any portion of the divine testimony, it will harmonize perfectly with all other parts of the scriptures of truth. However plausible, therefore, any interpretation of the word may seem, if such interpretation does not perfectly agree with all the scriptures, we must reject it as false and delusive, or we shall be liable to the charge of handling the word of God deceitfully.

Now in the case of Paul in speaking to the Athenians, he did not address them as spiritual children, qualified to hear and understand spiritual things; but as natural men who knew not the things of the spirit of God, and to whom the things of the spirit were foolishness, and things which they could not know, without being firstborn of God and taught by the Spirit. Yet he could and did address them as wise men of this world; as men of learning, of intelligence, of strong intellectual capacity, as rational men, and reasoned with them on the manifest folly of their idolatry. He called their attention to their numerous altars, with their inscriptions, and showed that they were gods which were made by men's hands, and therefore the creatures of men, and not the creator of men, and therefore not entitled to the worship of their makers. He also told them that he had observed among their altars one inscribed to what they called the unknown God; thus acknowledging their ignorance of the true God. All their flourish of altars and devotion to the true God was ignorantly performed, as fully acknowledged by their inscription. This God, of whom they were confessedly ignorant, Paul proceeds to declare unto them, as the God that made the world and all things therein; seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing that he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, 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."

Thus Paul declared to them the true God, whom they ignorantly worshiped, as the Creator of all things, as the Lord of heaven and earth, as the Independent God who needs nothing from men; and who cannot be worshiped by the physical or mental powers of his creatures, or by any works of men's hands, or imaginations of their unrenewed hearts; he is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Totally inaccessible to men, by any power or ability which they possess; as "No man can come unto him, but by Christ, who is the way, and the truth, and the life." This God, of one blood, hath made all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. As his creatures then all are alike; whether they be wise men or fools, civilized or savage--Jews or Gentiles, learned or unlearned, and as he cannot be worshiped by their hands or acts, all are on a level. The time of their existence on earth, the number of their days, the place of their birth, habitation and death, are determined and before appointed of the Lord. And the reason assigned by the apostle, for this wise reservation of all power, and absolute government in the hands of the Sovereign God who presides over all beings and all events in earth and in heaven, is, that man, instead of looking to the works of their own hands, or idols of their

own make, should be compelled to look to him, or to seek after him as the controller of all events, and the sole ruler of the universe. God hath determined and before appointed all that comes to pass. Those whom he before appointed unto salvation shall, in strict harmony with his pre-determination, have their times and habitation, as he has arranged them in his inscrutable wisdom, so as to secure the end which God hath from the beginning declared and ordained, thus securing the accomplishment of his decree, that they shall seek the Lord instead of looking for salvation from sticks and stones, or from their own works--good or bad. The absolute sovereignty of God alone can secure this; for no man, independently of his special power and grace, ever did, or ever will truly seek the Lord. When God said to the psalmist, "Seek my face," the psalmist replied, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." And God has informed us that he, "Said not unto Israel, Seek ye my face in vain." God makes no effort in vain. He speaks the word, and it stands fast; he commands, and it is done. And whenever God speaks the word in calling sinners to repentance whether it be at Jerusalem or at Athens, among Jews or Gentiles, in pagan or christian countries, his word is quick and powerful; it is like the rain and the snow that cometh down from heaven (unbidden and unrestrained by mortals), and it returneth not thither; but accomplishes the purpose of God, so shall it be with his word which goeth out of his mouth. It shall accomplish the work whereunto he hath sent it and prosper in the thing which he please.

If there then be a determination on the part of God, by his before appointment, that any sinner in Athens, or anywhere else, shall feel after God, they shall be found seasonably, where he has before appointed for that purpose, and surrounded by all the circumstances which are necessary to make them seek the Lord, and as by the quickening power, and instructing wisdom of the Spirit they shall be taught to see the vanity of idols, and to look away from themselves, they shall feel after God, from a conviction that none but God can save them. None but quickened sinners know what it is to feel after God. When the quickened sinner becomes convinced of his helplessness, and that none but God can save him; it is with him doubtful whether there be any mercy in store for one so vile, so wretched, and so helpless. But if by heaven's high appointment, he is led to seek the Lord as a Savior, it is with an if haply he may find him. The word haply means a peradventure, on the part of the seeking soul; if it may be so; and it is with this kind of fear and trembling he seeks; saying perhaps with the poet:

"I'll to the gracious king approach
Whose septre pardon gives;
Perhaps he may command my touch,
And then the Suppliant lives."

Feeling after him is an expressive idea. One who is blind, or in the dark, cannot see the object of his desire, but he feels after it, and if successful, he knows by the sense of feeling that he has found that which he desired. So with the awakened sinner, who is thoroughly convinced that there is salvation in no other name; all is dark to him, as to how God can maintain his justice and truth in his salvation, still from dire necessity he is constrained to feel after what he cannot see; and it is with a peradventure; if haply, I may find him of whom Moses and the prophets did write and when he finds him, he knows by his feelings as well as by the revelation of the blessed Savior to his faith, that it is his God and Savior, and he fully knows and cheerfully confesses,

"My seeking his face was all of his grace;
His mercy demands, and shall have all the praise."

"Though he be not far from every one of us." Jehovah, who alone can save sinners with an everlasting salvation is not a God afar off; he is everywhere present, beholding the evil and the good. However blind and incompetent we are to see him, he always sees us. All things are naked and open to him with

whom we have to do. We are, with all his creatures, surrounded by his presence, his power, and his providence; “For in him we live, and move, and have our being.” That is, as his creatures. We can neither live nor move independently of him. If he did not exist, we could have no being. Our life and breath, and all things depend on him.

“My thoughts, before they are my own,
Are to my God distinctly known;
He knows the words I mean to speak,
E're from my opening lips they break.

Within thy circling power I stand,
On every side, I find thy hand;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God.

If up to heaven, I take my flight,
'Tis there thou dwells't enthron'd in light;
Or dive to hell, there vengeance reigns,
And Satan groans beneath his chains.

If mounted on a morning ray,
I fly beyond the western sea,
Thy swifter hand would first arrive,
And there arrest thy fugitive.

Or should I try to shun thy sight,
Beneath the spreading veil of night,
One glance of thine, one piercing ray,
Would kindle darkness into day.”

Having thus faithfully declared the true God to the Athenians in his power, providence, sovereignty, purpose, determinations, appointments, and omnipresence, he appealed to certain of their poets, who had acknowledged their dependence on God for their being, and then deduced from the argument that we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. For such were the gods which they worshiped, and such, we may add, are worshiped very extensively, even by professors of christianity at the present day by all who depend on gold, or silver, or the arts and devices of men for the salvation of souls. The apostle admits the long-suffering of God, with the idolatry of former times; when the sable shades of heathen darkness mantled all the Gentile world. But now that the Son of God has made his advent to the world, has broken down the separating wall between Jews and Gentiles, and given open testimony of his divine character and mission, in his resurrection from the dead, all men everywhere are commanded to repent; that is, to desist from idolatry. No longer shall they with impunity, in Gentile lands, ascribe salvation to gold or silver, or to the arts or works, or to the devices of men. Because he hath appointed, not only the bounds of our habitation, for the purposes before considered; but he hath also appointed a day in the which he 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.”

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is given by Paul as an indisputable evidence, that God will judge the world in righteousness, and punish idolatry in due time. For if the sins of God's own chosen people, when found on the immaculate Lamb of God, could not be expiated with less than the Redeemer's life and blood, how shall they escape the righteous judgment of God, who dare to have any other god before him?

The term repent as applied by Paul to the Athenians, and to all men everywhere, is not the repentance which Christ is exalted to give to Israel, which is unto salvation, and needeth not to be repented of; but is that repentance, which implies a discontinuance of their idolatrous and heathen devotion – as rational men, and a due acknowledgement of the true and living God, in his manifested perfections, in Creation, Providence, Wisdom, Sovereignty and Omnipresence.

We have thus, by request, written our views on the text proposed. If they, or any portion of them, shall be found to conflict with any part of the scriptures of truth, let them be rejected. But first let them be carefully compared with the divine testimony, and for whatever of truth which this article contains, let God be praised; and may he forgive all our errors, and save us with his everlasting salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 15, 1861.

MATTHEW 25:14-30

We have often been requested to give our views on this parable, and we have sometimes ventured to give such views as we have had on the subject; but we have never pretended to have any special light upon this subject, nor do we now feel competent to the undertaking. We have always found it difficult to explain satisfactorily to our own mind any of the parables contained in the sacred volume, excepting so far as their obvious intention may be inferred from the subjects and circumstances on which they were spoken. God has been pleased to open his mouth in parables and to utter dark sayings of old (Psa. 78:2), and it was the practice of our Redeemer in the days of his flesh to use parables, and without a parable spake he not unto the multitude. (Matt. 13:34) “And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speaketh thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.” (Matt. 13:10-14)

Herein is the wisdom, purpose, and pleasure of God displayed in hiding these things from the wise and prudent of this world, and in revealing them unto babes in his kingdom; that no man shall glory in his presence; but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. The very parables which involve the instructions of Christ in impenetrable darkness to the multitude are employed by the Spirit to illustrate the same things to those unto whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom. A parable is in

itself simply a similitude, or a supposed case, used to illustrate a reality. And these similitudes and comparisons are so chosen and used by infinite wisdom, as to secure the great design of God, both in concealing the things of the Spirit from the carnal, and in instructing his disciples. Thus, like the cloud which attended Israel in the wilderness, it afforded light and protection to them, while it was darkness to their enemies.

The parable now to be considered is given, with several others of like import, for the special admonition of the disciples, as it was not addressed to the multitude, as there were none present but disciples, who had asked him certain questions privately, as he sat with them on the mount of Olives, and was therefore spoken to them for their exclusive benefit. (See Chapter 24:3.)

The subject on which these parables were spoken must be understood in order to know their design and application. Our Lord had been personally with these disciples from the time they were called to be his servants, but now he was soon to go into a far country, or to suffer, and die upon the cross, and then arise from the dead and ascend up into heaven, which from earth is a far country; but he was also to return again in due time. One of the three questions which they had asked him was, “What shall be the sign of thy coming?” To this he had replied, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh. Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But, and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. 24:42-44; 46-51.)

From all these preceding admonitions in the twenty-fourth chapter we may safely infer that the three parables in the twenty-fifth chapter were used by our Lord to solemnly impress his disciples with an understanding of the importance of their obligation to obey him as their divine Master, and especially when he should go to his Father, and they see him no more in the flesh. For although he was about to go away, he had assured them he would come to them again, and as a Master, who had an undisputed right to their service; he would hold them to a rigid account of their stewardship, at his coming. Now speaking of the time of his coming to reckon with them, he says, “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins,” etc. That is, at the time of his coming, which time they did not know for it should be as a thief in the night. The wise virgins represent the faithful servants, who shall be prepared for the coming of their lord, as they were with lamps trimmed and burning at the coming of the bridegroom, and the foolish virgins represent the wicked and slothful servants which had concluded their lord delayed his coming, and were carelessly mingling with the drunken. And in applying the parable of the virgins, he adds this parable of the talents, saying, “For *the kingdom of heaven* is as a man traveling into a far country,” etc. These italicized words are supplied by our translators. Should we omit them, the text will read, “For, as a man traveling into a far country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another, one; to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey.” If we have understood the foregoing correctly, Christ alludes to himself as the Lord, or Master of the servants, and to his being about to leave them, as stewards, in charge of his goods. The servants are said to be his own servants, and he invests them with talent, or talents, according to their respective ability. The talents and the ability of all the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ are furnished them by him. He is their Lord and

Master; all that they have and all they are, are his property, and they are not their own, hence he has a right to direct and control them, and to discriminate in the amount of talents and responsibility. And certainly Christ has done this; when he took his journey in his ascension: “When he ascended up on high, he gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” There is a diversity of gifts, but all by the same spirit, and this diversity is set forth in our parable as five, two, and one talents. Having thus commissioned his own servants, straitway he took his journey. The very last interview he held with his disciples he breathed upon them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost;” and bid them, “Go, teach all nations,” etc., “And straitway a cloud received him out of their sight.” But an angel informed them that he would return again in like manner as they had seen him go up into heaven; all of which seems to agree perfectly with the import of this parable. But when he should so return he did not tell them; but bid them watch – for it should be like a thief in the night, or at least at a time when the unruly servants would least expect his return. The servant which had five, and he who had two talents improved them, and received the approbation of their lord at his coming, and were welcomed into the joy of their lord. This was not, however, as a reward of merit, for they being servants, as we have before said, with all their ability and talents, belonged to and were the property of their master. This idea is expressly stated – these were his own servants, hence their service belonged to him; but as a gracious act, he made them partakers of his joy. Thus Paul, while disclaiming all merit, says, “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.” The crown is a gift, not a debt, or payment for service rendered; and as to Paul, so also to all who love the appearing of Christ.

Thus far perhaps, our views of the parable may seem sufficiently clear to the sister who asked, and others, but the more difficult part of the subject remains to be discussed, or elucidated. The wicked and slothful servant also had a talent and did not improve it, and it is taken from him and given to him that had ten talents, and he is cast into outer darkness, and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The supposed difficulty will be obviated when we consider the difference between servants of the Lord and the children of God. Christ not only is the everlasting Father of that seed which God has said shall serve him and be counted to him for a generation, but he is also their Master, their Owner, their Lord, and their King. In all the parables and figures as in every express declaration of the scriptures where God’s people are brought to view in the relationship of children, their vital and indissoluble union and joint heirship with him is distinctly expressed, and they can no more fail of their inheritance of glory than Christ can fail of the glory which he had with his Father before the world began. But when the disciples are presented in the relation of servants, their relative duties, obligations, and punishment for delinquencies are implied. The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever. The discipline of the servant and that of a son, until the son becomes of age, maybe alike, but the privilege and certain inheritance of the two are widely different. As it is said, “A seed shall *serve* him,” etc. (Psa. 22:30). We infer that all the seed, or children of God, are called into the service of Christ, to obey his commands, walk in his precepts, and keep his judgments, and in doing this they are servants, as well as sons. But we presume Christ has servants which are not sons; or at least not manifest as sons. A servant of Christ is equivalent to a disciple, and a disciple of Christ is one who serves, and obeys whatsoever he commands them. But Christ himself has said, “And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:27) But he does not say they cannot be his children. To be a

child depends wholly on relationship; but to be a servant, on allegiance and service. “His servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey.”

The difference will more clearly appear by considering the disciples, or servants of Jesus to whom this parable was originally spoken. They were all certainly the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he said he was their Master. But of at least one of them we presume it will not be contended that he was a son. Judas Iscariot was a disciple. Jesus called to him twelve disciples, whom he named apostles, and Judas was one of that number. And according to the sense of this parable, he received a talent – or a part of the ministry. “And in those days Peter stood in the midst of the disciples, and said, Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.” “For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and, his bishoprick let another take.” (Acts 1:15-17, 20)

Now should we suppose Judas to have been a servant, or disciple, as he is really called, and this ministry to be the goods divided among the servants, and Judas to have received one talent, and Paul to have received five, and as he labored more abundantly than all the servants, to have gained the other five; the one talent was ultimately taken from Judas, and given to Paul, for Paul was called to take the bishoprick vacated by Judas, and Paul, as we have shown, did finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received, and had entered into the joy of his Lord, to wear the crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge has given to him; and Judas is fallen, and goes to his own place where there is darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth. The case of Judas among the disciples – his wickedness, and punishment, answers well to the servant who was cast out into outer darkness.

But not only Judas among the apostles, but there were multitudes of disciples who called Jesus Master, who could not endure his doctrine, and turned away and walked no more with him.

But as we have presented some servants who give no evidence of being sons, before we close we will enquire if there be not some sons or children who are not, strictly speaking, servants or disciples? Are there not some, yea, many, who have passed from death unto life, have tasted the good word of life and of the joys of the world to come; – who have seen themselves poor, guilty, lost and perishing sinners, justly condemned by the righteous law of God; who in their extremity cried out, “Lord, save or I perish,” who have felt the joy of pardoned sins, unto whom Jesus has been revealed as their Savior, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely, who have never taken up their cross and followed their Lord and Master in baptism, or any of his ordinances? If there are such, and we believe we know of many, they certainly are children, for they were born again, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God – can they be disciples? Jesus says they cannot; and if they do not obey him, how can they be his servants? “A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts?” (Mal. 1:6) But how is it that a son who loves his father should withhold the honor due by obeying and serving him? How is it set forth in the parable? The undutiful servant says, “I knew thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth.” In the application of the admonition presented in this subject, let us enquire whether there be not some of God’s children who are reasoning as did the slothful servant, and saying their Lord’s requirements are hard and unreasonable? If he requires me to come out and improve my talent, by public profession of his name, and obedience to his command, he would reap where he has not sown. If he would sow more plentifully, that is, if he would relieve me of all my doubts and fears, and give me more light, joy, and comfort, more zeal and strength, and remove this

troublesome cross out of my way, and give me a full assurance that my pathway shall be smooth and pleasant, then I would not think it hard that he should have my service.

Not only are there multitudes of this class of delinquents, but also among those who have publicly espoused his cause, there may be found those who say, "If the Lord would give me a greater gift so that I could speak like some who have five times the amount of talent that I have, I would lift up my voice as a witness for God and truth; but as it is, why should I show my ignorance by exhibiting my one talent, and so perhaps bring down on me the scorn and reproach of the enemy?" And among the ministers of the word there may be some who say, "Alas! for me. The Lord requires me to preach his gospel that he has sowed so sparingly. I know so little, and am surrounded by so many hindrances which the Lord could, if it were his pleasure, so easily remove. My time and attention is so closely occupied to know how to answer the questions, What shall I eat? What shall I drink? And where withal shall I be clothed? How can I neglect my farm or merchandise, or whatever my worldly occupation may be, without injustice to myself and to my family?" Thus the earth of our carnal reasoning, and the affairs of the world, may bury up, to some extent, if not altogether, the talent. But let us be assured, if we are the Lord's children, we shall be saved, yet so as by fire; and as his servants, we shall feel his chastening scourge, and go into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Of course, we do not mean that God's children shall finally fail of their inheritance in glory; for God is faithful, he will not deny himself; but he is also righteous, and he will visit our transgressions with his rod, and our disobedience and slothfulness with many stripes.

When Israel for their disobedience and idolatry were sent down into Babylon, then some of them wept when they remembered Zion; it was to them a place of darkness – of weeping – and lamentation; while there was also, on the part of their adversaries, gnashing of teeth. The tumults which now prevail in the world, the wars and rumors of wars which agitate the nations of the earth, and especially our own beloved States, should admonish us that God's righteous judgments are abroad; that the day of reckoning is at hand; that our Lord cometh in an hour when transgressors think not. And the prophet saith he cometh suddenly to his temple. But who shall abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?

Whatever our ability or opportunity may be, our Lord has given us the full amount of talent that he requires us to improve. He will reap no more than he has sown, he will not gather what he has not strewed. He will not require of us the improvement of talents given to others. Where much is given, much will be required, and where little is given, but little will be required. If any of us cannot reap, perhaps we can bind some of the sheaves. Let us be active, for the harvest is great and the laborers are few.

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 15, 1861.

ASSOCIATIONS

Among the various religious denominations where churches are formed into what are called associations, there is much difference in regard to the subject of ecclesiastical power vested in them.

But as the enquiries of our correspondent relate exclusively to those of the Old School Baptists, we will confine our remarks to them. But as we are not authorized to define the views of all Old School Baptists on the subject, we will not hold any of them responsible for such views as we may give; but we will only say that the following views are substantially what we understand to be the views of the Old School Baptists generally.

An Old School Baptist Association is a community of Old School Baptist churches, harmoniously agreeing in faith and practice, who, for the purpose of general edification, and correspondence, and to strengthen each others hands, and for mutual comfort, agree or covenant together, that they will meet together periodically, as often as they may agree, by messengers – bearing letters from the several churches, certifying the due appointment of the messengers, and giving information of the state and condition of the churches, of their steadfastness in the faith and order of the gospel, of their general prosperity or adversity – that they may participate in each others joys and griefs as the case may be. This association, or intercourse, is to be kept up so long as all the several churches may continue to walk together in fellowship and harmony. No church of our order is required to unite in this arrangement, to entitle them to our fellowship as all must be in fellowship before they can be admitted into the arrangement.

All Old School Baptist Associations, so far as our knowledge extends, assert emphatically the independence of the churches as such, and disavow the right of the association to interfere with their acts of church discipline. We claim that the power is vested in every church of Christ to discipline her own members according to the rule given in the New Testament, without the interference of any other religious body on earth. Or, in other words, that the church of Christ, when acting according to the word and spirit of Christ, is the highest court under heaven, and from her decisions there is no court of appeals divinely authorized on earth.

Nevertheless, if any church, either in or out of any such associational compact, shall manifestly depart from the faith or order of the New Testament, the association, and every orderly church, and every individual disciple, may, and is in duty bound, to withdraw, and withhold their fellowship from such disorderly church, as they should from every disorderly brother, until they shall be restored to gospel order.

Associations being intended to facilitate christian correspondence, generally hold correspondence also with sister associations, so long as they are satisfied that they are of one heart and of one mind; and for this purpose they interchange letters of correspondence, in which they severally publish their understanding of the faith and order of the gospel, and by the interchange of ministers and messengers they compare their views carefully from time to time, each association holding the right to drop the correspondence with any association which, in their judgment, has departed from the faith and order of the gospel. In short, the associations have the same right and are under the same obligation in their associated capacity as each individual composing it has, to withdraw from every brother, or church that walks disorderly, but no more; while the authority to adjudicate the case of any brother or sister that may be accused of disorder belongs to the church to which he or she belongs.

Every church, however, while rightfully claiming her conceded right to transact her own business independently of associations – other churches or councils, if she desires to be recognized as walking orderly, will feel desirous of the concurrence of sister churches in her judgment in each case, lest confidence in her order should be shaken, and fellowship impaired.

Universally we have found the maxim of our Lord fully verified; He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest that they are wrought of God; while it is equally certain that they who do wrong shun the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd.

There is a courtesy due from every church to sister churches where cases occur which affect other churches, as in acts of discipline in relation to ministers, deacons, and other prominent members who frequently visit sister churches to seek for a concurrence of judgment in all such cases. But churches actuated by the least humility and christian meekness are the most apt to put themselves upon their dignity – and refuse all friendly advice in such cases and often much to their own injury; while those churches most desirous of keeping the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace being most jealous of their ability to act, desire to avail themselves of all the counsel of brethren in whom they have confidence.

We are no advocate of Ecclesiastical Councils (so called) to sit as a court over the church, as no church has a right to shift off the responsibility of her acts upon any such unscriptural body, but we do believe that it is in perfect harmony with the spirit and the letter of the Word for churches, in all difficult matters which are likely to involve their standing in the eyes of their sister churches, to secure, as far as possible, the advice (not dictation) of faithful brethren from abroad, and after considering their advice duly, to act for themselves.

We have thus far indulged in some general remarks, and much more might be written on the subject, but we will come more directly to the case supposed by the enquirer after the Truth.

The case as stated supposes a preacher, having a standing as pastor in an Old School Baptist Church which is associated with other churches professing the same faith and order, has fallen into error in faith or practice, so that a portion of the church of which he is a member cannot fellowship him, but the majority of the church, because they sustain him in his error, is it necessary that all other churches of the association act with the disorderly minister because his disorder is endorsed or winked at by a majority of the church?

Our judgment on this supposition is that the churches being associated or unassociated, providing they have recognized each other as sister churches, makes no difference. If the righteous decision of a gospel church, walking in unquestionably gospel order, is final, and no other church has any right to annul or interfere with it, it does not follow that if a church depart from the order of the gospel in sustaining a disorderly pastor, that other churches are bound to endorse or respect their unrighteous decisions, for that would rob orderly churches of their independence, and give undue power to disorderly churches to drag others into their disorder.

Individual members, or minorities of churches, ought to be exceedingly cautious of taking ground against the judgment of the majority – lest they become factious, unruly, heady, high minded, and contentious. But there may be cases where it is their duty to dissent from the action of the majority. And the case supposed above, if correctly stated, we think is undoubtedly one. We hold that no church act, whether passed by a majority or a minority, or even if it be unanimous, can be binding unless it be dictated by the spirit and letter of the divine rule. When, therefore, whole churches, or associations of churches, depart from the faith and order of the gospel they are (if they cannot be reclaimed) to be dropped from the connection of all orderly churches, associations and brethren. How can we walk together if we be not agreed? When a minister departs from the divine rule, either in doctrine or practice, or in both, it concerns more than the church in which he holds his membership. Most ministers are ordained and set apart to the work by a presbytery called together from churches of the connection. The reason of this is that they maybe competent to preach or administer ordinances in any church of the

same faith and order when they may be called on so to do. Their commission, if called of God to preach, is in all the world, and to every creature; hence, all are very deeply interested in his character and standing, and as the church to which he belongs, as well as the presbytery by whom he was ordained, including the churches to whom the members of the presbytery belong, are to some extent responsible for his character, and as his public standing makes his disorders more prominent than those of private members, a departure on his part from the truth in doctrine, or any unbecoming course of conduct is attended with bitter results not only to himself, personally, but to the church, the churches, and all who desire to be fed, comforted, and edified by his ministry; and a greater reproach falls upon the cause of truth and righteousness of which he professes to be the advocate. Hence, the very solemn charge, not only to the minister, but also to the church, as to the character they shall bear – men full of the Holy Ghost, not given to much wine, no strikers, of good report of them which are without, good disciplinarians, of unexceptionable morals, as ensamples to the flock, keeping their body – or the passions and carnal propensities of the body – under control, patient, meek, affectionate, and God-fearing.

Men possessing all these excellent qualities, to a good degree, may nevertheless fail to give full satisfaction to all the members of a church, and they may suffer persecution from the world, but they will bear it patiently for their Master's sake. But in the absence of these characteristics they cannot be of much service to the church of God. If they assume a haughty bearing, and a careless indifference to the complaints of brethren, and fortify themselves by their popularity with a majority in the church, become obstinate and willful, heady and high-minded, they may retain an influence for great evil, but of no benefit to the church, or to the cause.

Parties will naturally arise, divisions will appear, gospel travel will be interrupted and disorder will spread throughout the church, and like a devastating conflagration will extend from church to church until the visibility of the church will be involved in a darksome cloud if not totally obliterated.

A *brother* or a minister of Christ should not be made an offender for a word, nor for a mere difference of judgment on unimportant subjects. Ministers, as well as others, are in the flesh and have infirmities which need the forbearance and sympathy of the saints, but their ministry should be faithfully and prayerfully watched by the saints. One shall speak and the rest judge. The saints shall judge angels. But this watchfulness must not be with a censorious and fault-finding spirit, but with singleness of heart for the glory of God. And if the minister advances anything in opposition to the word, or to the law and the testimony, approach him tenderly, lovingly, and in the spirit of meekness, and call his attention to the subject. If he willfully persists in error, and the aggrieved brother is satisfied that it is error, let the matter be brought before the church, but only in an orderly way. If the church sustain the pastor, let the aggrieved brother or brethren carefully reconsider the matter, but if fully convinced that it be error, and of an important nature and tendency so that they cannot comfortably submit to the decision, it is customary to request the church to invite sister churches to send faithful and judicious brethren to advise with them on the subject. And it is presumed that if the church feels a consciousness that she is right, she will not hesitate to submit the matter to the judgment of brethren who are unprejudiced, to advise them on the subject. But if they refuse to do so, especially where the matter has assumed such dimensions as not only threaten a division of the church, but to infest sister churches, then an appeal should be made by the aggrieved party to orderly churches of the connection. And if they entertain the complaint, which they will be likely to do in the case supposed, they will correspond with the church, which is said to have departed from gospel order, and if satisfaction be not obtained, the delinquent church will be dropped, with her heretical minister, from the connection of all orderly and sound

churches; and the aggrieved members driven out from their former home may be received on profession of faith by those who are of the same faith and order with them.

We confine our remarks to such cases as are described in the supposition in the queries presented. But we would faithfully warn all brethren to beware how they indulge in a factious, or fault-finding spirit. Such a spirit will be detected by all who are spiritual.

The independence of all the churches being equal, the action of one church in sustaining a disorderly minister has no power to impose him upon other churches who being equally independent have as good right to reject him. And on the other hand, the act of one church in expelling members because they cannot fellowship a disorderly minister who is sustained by the church cannot impose the obligation of other churches equally independent, also to reject them from communion and fellowship. But the two churches acting so oppositely can no longer be of the same faith and order, whether in or out of the association. An association, being but a meeting of churches, gives them no more nor any less authority than though they were unassociated. Hence, associations can in no sense be regarded as courts of appeal, their legitimate sphere being only to encourage christian correspondence, love, and union where fellowship already exists.

We have answered the queries of our friend honestly, giving our own views on the subject. Other brethren may differ with us, as we have no right to speak for others, and we claim no infallibility, but are as liable to err as others.

The queries came to us from a portion of the country where there are several highly esteemed churches of the Old School Baptist order, who are not associated at all by any formal organization, and who have heretofore repudiated associations, fearing that they may grow to become instruments of mischief. We have taken the more pains to show that in our view, their being associated or unassociated can make no difference in the case supposed.

May the Lord give us all grace to enable us to walk circumspectly that we may avoid all disorders, live in love and fellowship with all who are of the household of faith, and teach us to “deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 1, 1861.

THE TRUE POSITION OF THE CHURCH

A correspondent in our last number, Page 171, desires us to state what is the true position of the church in the trying circumstances of our nation. To this we reply that the church of the living God has but one legitimate or true position to occupy at any time, or under any circumstances, and that position is very clearly laid down in the New Testament. The nations of the earth, including our own, are of this world; the kingdom of Christ is not of this world. They are natural, temporal, and like all earthly things, must ultimately decay, but the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, heavenly, and everlasting. They have no affinity to each other, and the less each has to do in meddling with the other, the better it will be with both. It is true that the members of the church of God, while here on earth, have to do with both church

and state, but their duties to the one do not interfere with their faithful performance of every just obligation to the other. The true position of the church is as a city which is set upon a hill, whose light cannot be hidden. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion upon the sides of the North. Her foundation is in the Holy mountain. She is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom all the saints are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit. Thus her true position is on Christ as her Foundation, and in him as her chief corner stone – and her true destination is for the indwelling of the eternal God, through the Spirit.

Doctrinally, her position is immovably in the sovereign eternal and electing love of God; chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that she should be holy and without blame before him in love. God has graciously given her a position in his irrevocable purpose, grace, and decrees, and salvation hath he appointed for her walls and bulwarks. He is himself a wall of fire around about her, and the glory in her midst. Her position, as emblematically seen by John, was as a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; also as the holy city New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, adorned as a bride, prepared for her husband.

Although she is not of the world, at present she is in the world. God has chosen her in the furnace of afflictions and ordained that in the world she shall have tribulations, but he has also provided for her ultimate deliverance from all her tribulations and trials. In her loyalty to her eternal King, her position is at Jesus' feet, bowing her neck to his yoke, and observing all things whatsoever he has commanded her. Here she is to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made her free, but under no circumstances is she at liberty to change her position. Trusting in her God, she is like Mount Zion which cannot be moved. God is her Refuge and her Strength, and she needs no more. He has been her dwelling place in all generations, even from everlasting. He has carried and borne her all the days of old. She dwells in the secret place of the Most High, and shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Circumstances by which she is surrounded, so far as this world and all the things of the world are concerned, are ever changing. Kingdoms and nations rise and fall around her. Principalities and powers, thrones, and dominions are all subject to the power and providence of her God. All things are put under and in subjection to Zion's King. He has power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him. The perfect allegiance of all the saints to Christ does not by any means disqualify them for the faithful discharge of all relative duties to their fellow men; nor does it lessen their obligation to submit (as citizens of this world) to every ordinance of man. The laws of Zion require that every soul shall be subject to the higher power. "Children, obey your parents." "Servants, obey your masters." All are to obey magistrates, and rulers – such as kings or governors, or whatever the form of earthly government may be under which christians are providentially placed, they must be loyal.

The Church of God, as such, should keep her garments unspotted from the world, and all her members in their religious capacity are forbidden to conform to the fashions of the world, or to be moved from their true position, as followers of the meek and lowly Savior, by any strife or commotion which may agitate the nations of the earth. While as citizens of the world, as we have remarked, their respectful loyalty is due to the powers that be, and they may themselves be called to take part in administering, as well as in sustaining human governments. They should discharge all such duties, not in their religious, but in their civil capacities. The present is no doubt a very trying time to all who truly fear God, and tremble at his word; but it is calculated to try their patience, and prove their faith in, and fidelity to, their Lord and Master. It is their privilege and duty as churches and as individual christians, in their

religious capacity, to make prayers and intercessions to God for the government we are under; that God may so direct and over rule all things, that we may be permitted to live peaceably, quietly, and unblamably with all men; for this is good and acceptable to God our Savior. As citizens of the world it is our duty to be peaceable and loyal, while as christians it is required of us, by the Lord of hosts, that we should “Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.” (Micah 6:8)

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 1, 1861.

ROMANS 9:21

“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?”

These words are used by the apostle in his arguments in support of the indisputable and righteous sovereignty of God, and in illustration of the position this appeal is made. It is readily conceded, we presume, that a potter (that is, a mechanic whose occupation it is to make a clay stone or earthen ware) has a right to manufacture his own stock into whatever description of ware he pleases. Should he make a vessel to be used as an ornament for the parlor, and of the same mass of clay another for the vilest use in the kitchen, no sane person would accuse him of injustice – or of transcending his undoubted rights. This figure is used (Isa. 64:8) to show the sovereignty of God in directing the destiny of man, and that we should be passive in his hands. “But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are the work of thy hand.” And in Isaiah 45:9-12, “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? Or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.” Men are thus described as mere potsherds of the earth, the earthen vessels which are formed of the dust, and broken by apostasy, into potsherds; and as such – let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth; or fallen man strive with his fellow fallen man; for they are equals, they occupy equal ground in their strife. But woe to him that striveth with his Maker. How can the clay maintain a conflict with the potter? “He hath no hands.” And if the disparity between the clay and the potter is too great to admit of strife, how much greater the distance between man and his Maker. The potter is himself made of the same material of which his hands fashion the vessels which he makes, and the difference between animate and inanimate clay can give but a feeble idea of the infinite disparity of man in his best estate, and his Creator, who has stretched out the heavens, and commanded all the host of heaven and earth. The very earth on which we subsist, and of which we were made, God has created. It belongs wholly to him, and he has a supreme right to dispose of it as he pleases. But he has not only made the earth, but he has also created man upon it. Who shall then be allowed to contest his right to dispose of earth and man as seemeth good in his sight? Have we as the creatures of God any power, any rights, or any privileges, that he has

not endowed us with? And can we conceive that a God of all wisdom would endow his creatures with power to subvert his purposes, and prevent the execution of the orders of his eternal throne?

“Shall the vain race of flesh and blood
Contend with their Creator God?
Shall mortal man presume to be
More holy, wise, or just than he?”

If it be admitted then that the potter has a right to form his clay as he pleases, and to fashion from the same lump one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor, can it be denied that God had the right to create just such a world as he has made, and for the very purpose for which he has made it? And that he had the right to diversify his creatures, from the shining angels to the crooked serpent and the groveling worm? Had he not the right to make one star to differ from another star in magnitude and glory? Deny this right and we deny his prerogative to make a greater and a lesser light, and to assign to each their office and their place; the one to rule the day, and the other to rule the night.

The apostle applies this sovereignty of God to his supreme control of our eternal destiny. Has one a hope of life and immortality and another living without hope and without God in the world; who has made them to differ? Jacob is loved of his God and Esau is hated. How comes this to pass? Was Jacob and Esau not made of the same lump of clay? Were they not the children of the same earthly parents, and twin brothers? Certainly they were. Could one more than the other have influenced the love or hatred of their Maker? (“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;”) It was said unto her, (their mother) the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” (Rom. 9:11-12)

For lack of space we leave the subject for the present. We may resume it hereafter, if the Lord will.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 15, 1861.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

One hundred years ago there was not a single white man in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, or Illinois territories. Then what is now the most flourishing part of America was as little known as the country around the mountains of the Moon. It was not until 1769 that the hunter of Kentucky, the gallant and adventurous Boone, left his home in North Carolina to become the first settler of Kentucky. The first pioneer of Ohio did not settle until twenty years after that time.

An hundred years ago Canada belonged to France, and the whole population of the United States did not exceed a million and a half people.

An hundred years ago the great Frederick of Prussia was performing those great exploits which have made him immortal in military annals, and with his little monarchy was sustaining a single handed contest with Russia, Austria, and France, the three great powers of Europe combined.

An hundred years ago the United States were the most loyal of the British Empire, and on the political horizon no speck indicated the struggles which in a score of years thereafter established the great Republic of the world.

An hundred years ago there were but four newspapers in America – with a combined circulation not exceeding three thousand; steam engines or cylinder presses had not been imagined, and railroads and telegraphs had not entered into the remotest conceptions of man. When we come to look back at it thru the vista of history, we find that to the century which has passed has been allotted more important events in their bearing upon the happiness of the world than almost any other era that has happened since the creation. A hundred years hence – who can foretell our developments.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 15, 1861.

THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR, 1861

This number of the *Signs of the Times* completes our twenty-ninth volume, and the incessant labor of its present and only publisher, proprietor and editor, for the last twenty-nine years. During our connection with this publication, according to the course of nature, one generation has passed away, and very many of our present patrons were unborn when our labors commenced. Yet there are a few upon our list of subscribers who have sustained us from the beginning; but thousands of those who witnessed our commencement have finished their course, and left these mortal shores to return to earth no more. We who survive have great reason to acknowledge, with humble gratitude, the goodness and mercy of God in sustaining us unto the present time. Because He changes not, we are not consumed. Surely His mercy endureth forever, and it has followed us all our days.

Should we recount all the trials, perplexities, conflicts and discouraging circumstances through which the Lord has brought us, the record would fill a volume; and we must say with David, “They are more than we can number.” O, that we could render suitable acknowledgements and thanksgiving to the Lord! The year now closing has been the most prolific in startling events of any which we have witnessed. Although the season has been crowned with abundant crops to reward the labors of the husband-man, and to furnish subsistence in abundance for both man and beast, and in many other respects God has showered temporal blessings upon us with a profuse hand, yet we are overshadowed with an appalling cloud, which throws a gloom over every family and household in our country. The seeds of dissension which have been sowed broadcast over our beloved country for many years have ripened into a civil conflict of fearful dimensions. The ties of fraternity which were cemented with the patriotic blood of our revolutionary fathers, and which have formerly bound the citizens of our widespread country in a consolidated commonwealth, surpassing all other nations in prosperity, peace, and independence, have failed to secure us from strife and internecine war. The causes which have led to this lamentable state of discord and bloodshed, it may not be proper for us to discuss. But as we feel the scourge may we not, in the language of the scriptures, enquire, “Is there evil in the city (or country) and the Lord hath not done it?” We must acknowledge that God holds the destiny of nations, as He holds the destiny of men, in His own hands, and if favored with peace and prosperity, all admit that we

are bound to give thanks to God, as the giver of every good and perfect gift. And if it be His sovereign pleasure to withhold those inestimable blessings and to send His awful judgments abroad, it becomes us equally to acknowledge His hand and humbly bow before Him, confessing our sins which have provoked His wrath. “Shall we receive good from His hand, and not evil?” was the inquiry of Job in his deep afflictions. God is certainly just and righteous in all His ways; and it becomes us to “Be still and know that He is God!” And while we feel His rod we shall confess our sins and repent in dust and ashes. The consequence of the present war has thus far fallen very heavily upon the Old School Baptists, and especially so on our publication. As a church the Old School Baptists, who have had no hand in producing the existing animosity which now threatens the perpetuity of our civil institutions, are, for the present, deprived of the social intercourse which has formerly been so pleasant and profitable to us; and the interchange of epistolary correspondence, through our paper, is, to a large extent, cut off by the conflict in which sister States are involved. Under these circumstances the question, Shall the publication of the *Signs of the Times* be allowed to stop? has assumed a grave importance. To continue its publication must necessarily require a strong effort on the part of such of its friends as are still able to reach forth a helping hand. At least one half of its former patrons must be, for the present, and during the suspension of the mails and the continuance of the war, dropped from our list and our circulation restricted to those States where the mails are still conveyed. Many of those in our Northern States where mailing facilities are still continued, by prostration of their business and other causes incidental to the war, are compelled to retrench their expenses to bring them within their limited means; and some have already ordered a discontinuance of their subscriptions because of the hardness of the times. But while we all admit that common prudence requires retrenchment of our expenses, would it not be well for us carefully to consider whether we can afford to dispense with the *Signs of the Times* as a medium for christian correspondence, and thereby of its spiritual consolation? The comparatively trifling expense of one dollar a year would make but little difference, while, perhaps, there are many other places where a retrenchment of the same amount would not deprive us of any religious privilege. Many of our subscribers have assured us they would sooner dispense with one meal a day, or any other strictly worldly comfort, than the privilege of hearing from the scattered flock of the Redeemer, through the periodical visits of the *Signs of the Times*.

Never since we began the publication has its circulation been needed more than at the present time. While all around us seems tempestuous and stormy; when many other sources of comfort are cut off, do we not need still more the comforting, edifying and cheering communications of those whom we dearly love in the Lord?

Brethren, friends, and patrons of the *Signs of the Times*, let us hear from you, and those who feel resolved to renew their subscription, please make an effort to procure other names, and send in clubs, if possible. Remember that five dollars sent in advance will pay for six copies for one year.

As we are cut off from all correspondence with the publisher of the *Southern Baptist Messenger*, remittance for that paper should no longer be sent to us. For the present we receive payments for no other publication but the *Signs of the Times*.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 15, 1861.

THE NEW YEAR, AND THE NEW VOLUME

The wheels of nature with untiring motion have brought us to the beginning of a New Year, and we again greet our readers with the customary compliments of the season, and wish them all a Happy New Year. Truly if our happiness consisted only in worldly pleasure and temporal prosperity, our prospects for a happy new year would be dark and gloomy. Our skies are shadowed with a lowering cloud portentous of continued strife and bitter discord among those who have been wont to regard each other as friends and fellow-citizens of one great sisterhood of confederated States. But alas! how changed is the picture from what was presented in former years of our national history. What is to be the result, or when the bloody strife shall cease, the wisest of our statesmen cannot predict with any degree of certainty. He alone who holds the destiny of all things in his own hands can know when, if ever, peace shall again spread her balmy wings over our once happy but now greatly agitated country. But while the booming of cannon, the clashing of swords, resound with battles of the warrior, and much of the best blood of our citizens is flowing, towns and cities are being laid waste, and men are engaged in the fearful conflict; christians may still find peace and happiness in that kingdom which is not of this world. Whatever tumults may distract the earth, the Zion of our God shall forever remain a peaceable abode for all the sons of peace. Upon her towering walls of salvation waves the banner of love and the Prince of Peace presides in power and majesty over all her favored inhabitants. Blessed truly are they whose privilege it is to enter in through her gates, and who have a right to the tree of life. The saints who desire a happy new year are forbidden to look for happiness on earth. In the world they shall have tribulation, but in Jesus they shall have peace. Let them heed the admonition of the apostle and set not their affections on the things of this world, but things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high. And let us all remember that they only are truly happy who love God, and are reconciled to his government. But the way of the transgressor is hard.

As we are entering upon the new year it becomes us to review the way in which the Lord our God has brought us. His mercies endure forever, and therefore we are not consumed. How it becomes us to prostrate ourselves at his feet with thanksgiving and praise for his loving kindness and tender mercy already bestowed on us, and to implore his grace to incline our hearts to love and serve him, and to enable us to walk worthy of our high and holy vocation. Holiness becomes his house forever, and without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

It is reasonable to suppose that our readers will expect to hear from us in regard to our prospects, position, and arrangements for the new Volume. One year ago we began the preceding Volume with a circulation of between six and seven thousand subscribers, extending throughout almost every State and Territory of the United States, and some in the Canadas. This Volume is commenced with less than one half of that number. The principal cause of this reduction, as our readers are aware, is the discontinuance of mailing facilities into the seceded States where the Baptists of our order are far more numerous than they are in the Northern States. But we have not only suffered the loss of our Southern subscribers in consequence of the Civil War, but confusion and derangement of business in the Northern States have circumscribed the ability of very many of our old patrons, so that they have withdrawn their support from us. We are not, however, discouraged. Believing as we do that the Lord has directed our publication for the edification and comfort of his scattered people, and hitherto has afforded us his sustaining power and grace, with humble reliance on him for a continuance of his support, we are resolved to continue our labors as long as we can enjoy the sensible evidence of his divine approval. And we confidently hope and believe he will incline our brethren and friends to render

all the encouragement and aid in their power. There probably never was a time when the scattered flock of Jesus needed a medium of correspondence like this more than at the present time. They have much to discourage, dishearten and perplex them, and as cold water is to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. It becomes them to speak the word of encouragement, of love, and fellowship to each other, and through our columns they may at once address, in the same epistle, thousands of their kindred in Christ Jesus. How long we may be favored with the privilege of this kind of correspondence, we do not know, but while we are so favored, let us not fail to appreciate it.

Our position is too well known to those who have long had the opportunity of reading our paper to require any new pledge from us. But as God shall afford us strength with the best ability we have, so long as we live, we shall publish what we honestly believe to be sustained by the scriptures of divine truth, though men or devils may oppose. We shall carefully avoid meddling with politics; but at the same time give our views unreservedly on every subject contained in the Bible, and only ask all who read our views to compare them faithfully with the word, and to accredit them no farther than they shall find them sustained by what God has said.

As to our arrangements for the present Volume, we shall have our printing this year under our own supervision, and devote our personal attention to every department of the publication. We have already expended over two thousand dollars in making improvements in our office, and we flatter ourself that the present Volume – though it may not reimburse our expenses – shall excel all the preceding Volumes. Our correspondence, though greatly curtailed by the loss, for the present at least, of our Southern writers, will be sufficient to make the reading matter interesting and profitable. No pains or reasonable expenses shall be spared to make this volume what it should be.

Our connection with the *Southern Baptist Messenger* is for the present suspended; as we have no means of corresponding with our son, the publisher of that journal, his residence and address being Covington, Newton County, Georgia.

The publication of the *Banner of Liberty* also being for the present suspended, we have no clubbing arrangements with any other paper. Our agents will only send orders for the *Signs of the Times*, at least until further notice.

Our terms will be as formerly, viz: One dollar and fifty cents per year for a single subscriber; but if paid in advance, but one dollar per year. Five dollars sent at one time in advance will secure six copies for one year.

United States Treasury notes will be received in payment, or current notes on any New York Banks, or on banks of and in the States east of New York, or on banks of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Ohio, or Indiana, or Canada – or if gold can be procured, it will suit us still better. For all odd amounts of less than one dollar, U.S. Postage stamps will be received at par.

All monies sent us by mail, if carefully put up and properly mailed to us, will be at our risk. All orders, remittances and other communications for the *Signs* must be addressed to Elder Gilbert Beebe, Middletown, Orange Co., N. Y.

Middletown, N. Y.,
January 1, 1862.

BLACK, BUT COMELY

Elder Beebe: – I am requested by a sincere lover of the truth to solicit your views on Songs 1:5 – “I am black, but comely,” etc.

Yours truly,
Delilah W. Ball

REPLY

It affords us great pleasure at all times to give such views as we have upon the Scriptures to those who sincerely love the truth; for we feel perfectly confident that all who sincerely love the truth are born of God, and taught by his spirit. To love the doctrines of men who have stolen the livery of truth to disguise their deformity and deceive the simple – although error so disguised may become popular in the world – requires no gracious operation of the Spirit to make me love it: for all men, in their native enmity to God, love error; but none can either know or love the truth sincerely until they have felt its power, and tasted its sweetness. The truth as it is in Jesus always magnifies and honors God, and at the same time abases the creature. Hence, whatever men may profess or pretend, until they are born of God and know experimentally the power of God’s love shed abroad in their hearts, they are inwardly opposed to the truth. But to the subject.

“I am black, but comely.” This seemingly paradoxical expression is made by one who is called the fairest among women; an enquirer after the truth; one who is seeking for the place where her Beloved feeds, and where he causes his flock to rest at noon. Although we presume the personage thus describing herself as both black and comely was undoubtedly intended to represent the Gentile church, we see no impropriety in applying her language as expressive of the sentiments and experience of every individual child of God whose heart the Lord has inclined to enquire the way to Zion, with his face set thitherward. The spouse of the Redeemer, the bride, the Lamb’s wife, and all the individual members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, when filled with the love of God are, as in the text, drawn out to seek him whom their soul loveth; and diligently to enquire for the footsteps of his flock. But the mystery of the complex character of saints, or the church, is the subject of the present enquiry. How can she be black and yet comely; as her complexion would indicate that she was uncomely in the extreme, and so very black as to seem to challenge nature to produce a parallel As black as the tents of Kedar, which were probably the most unsightly and black of any thing that could be named as a comparison; yet, while thus hideous and ugly, at the same time as spotless white and pure as the curtains of Solomon.

When the church, or when the individual christian, is heard to speak of their blackness, we understand them to speak of their earthly, depraved, unrenewed nature; and surely there is nothing that looks to them so hateful. They are truly amazed that God should have set his love on sinners of so deep a dye. While they can see nothing in their nature but vileness or in their conduct but sin and transgression against God, their heart is the cage of every hateful and unclean bird, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. O, how black and loathsome they appear to themselves to be. It is true they were unconscious of their vileness until the Sun had looked upon them; or until a revelation of Christ is made: as in the absence of the Sun, we are in total darkness, and cannot tell how disgustingly black and vile we appear until the light comes, which makes manifest: but then we felt the weight of our depravity. And as in nature, the more a person is exposed to the burning rays of the midsummer sun, the blacker they grow. So with the Christian, the more thoroughly they are made acquainted with the righteousness of God, the more effectually they become convinced of the guilt and pollution of their

own nature, and the wretched pollution of all human righteousness; until at length they become fully convinced that there is nothing short of the dirty, smoky tents of Kedar to which they can compare themselves. This is the effect of the Sun's looking upon them. Take, for an example, the prophet Isaiah. Hear him exclaim – "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Isa. 6:5) And Peter, when the Son looked on him in the palace of the high priest, went out and wept bitterly. And was it not even so when God looked upon us in the righteousness of his holy law; when the commandment came, and light broke forth in which we saw our own vileness that we could say we were black indeed, because the Son, which is the fountain and source of all true light, had looked on us. How did we then cry out, "Woe is me, for lam undone!" And from that moment on every one who has been enlightened to behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ will say with Job, "I have heard of thee O God, with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; therefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes." Truly the more we know of God, the more we enjoy of his presence throughout our whole pilgrimage, the greater will be our sense of our own personal vileness; until like Paul we shall exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Surely I am as black as the tents of Kedar; but at the same time I am –

Comely as the curtains of Solomon. While all our earthly nature is black with sin and depravity from the sole of the foot even unto the head, we are bruises and wounds and putrefying sores, so that there is no soundness in us, we have, nevertheless, a life which is hid with Christ in God, which is all fair. That which is born of the flesh is *flesh*, and "All flesh is as grass, and the goodliness thereof is as the flower of grass;" it fadeth and falleth away. But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; for it is born of incorruptible seed, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. It cannot sin because it is born of God, and the seed abideth in it. This spiritual life in us is as pure as the fountain from which it emanates; for it is Christ in us, the hope of glory. It cannot be contaminated or defiled with sin, or stained with guilt; and it is therefore whiter than snow, and unblemished as the curtains of Solomon. In ourselves we are black as the tents of Kedar; but in our Lord Jesus Christ we are fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. We have no comeliness but that which our Redeemer has put upon us. He found us in our blood, left in the open field to the loathing of our persons; and the Lord says to Jerusalem in Ezek. 16:8-14, "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water, yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine heard. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect *through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.*" To all of which Jerusalem responds, (Isa. 61:10) "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 her jewels."

"Defil'd and loathsome as we are,
He makes us white, and calls us fair."

“My filthy rags are laid aside:
He clothes me as becomes his bride:
Himself bestows my wedding dress,
The robe of perfect Righteousness.”

Middletown, N. Y.
January 1,1862.

JEREMIAH 2:33

Elder Beebe: – Please give your views on Jeremiah 2:33, and oblige an Inquirer After Truth.

REPLY

The passage proposed for consideration reads as follows: “Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.”

This searching appeal was made by the Lord God of Israel to Jerusalem by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet, after having rehearsed some of the wonderful works of God in his dealings with Israel, in breaking for them the Egyptian yoke, and conducting them in safely through the dreary wilderness, and putting them in possession of the promised land, and their ingratitude to him for his signal mercies, and their rejection of him as their God, their transgression of his laws, and their abominable idolatry. This righteous reproof, though in interrogative form, clearly implies a charge of inconstancy, a departure from the Lord, and a restless desire to secure the love of strangers, and to impart the knowledge of her ways to the wicked.

In the few remarks which we design to make on this text, we will notice that the Jerusalem which is addressed and reproved in our subject, is a type of the church of God under the gospel dispensation, and her wicked lewdness and idolatry prefigures the waywardness of those under the present dispensation, who having espoused the cause of the Redeemer, and professed allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ, have, like their prototype committed the same two evils which are charged on Israel in the thirteenth verse, namely: “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” If we would read the rebukes which the Lord administered to national Israel to profit, we should remember that these things were written for our learning, and examine carefully whether we are not to some extent involved in the abominations by which Israel was polluted. If we are the spiritual Jerusalem, of which the former was only the type, then we also have been redeemed from an house of bondage, and led forth by the mighty hand and outstretched arm of the God of our salvation. We also (but in a spiritual and experimental sense) have been preserved from the perils of the wilderness; we also have witnessed the awful majesty of almighty God, as he displayed himself from the clouded summit of the trembling mount which was convulsed at the presence of Jehovah, and we too have heard in thunder tones the proclamation of his fiery law. We have also professed to have entered into the land of rest, the gospel kingdom. “For we which have believed do enter into rest.” We have ceased from our own works, as God ceased from all the works which he had made, when he rested on the seventh day. We have renounced all hope in every other

name, we have solemnly engaged to take on us his yoke, and learn of him who is meek and lowly; and like Israel, we have repeatedly said, All that the Lord our God has commanded us, that will we do. But how have we kept the pledge? As individuals, every saint is heard to confess with deep contrition his short-comings. But the reproof was applied to Jerusalem, collectively, when in a state of deep degeneracy, when her priests had ceased to inquire after the Lord, and they who handled the law were utterly ignorant of God. We cannot conceive that this state of things is always applicable to the whole church of God, neither was this at all times the case with the old Jerusalem. If we understand the bearing of this subject in its typical bearing, it is applicable to the church, or to any branch of the church of God, whenever and wherever they depart from the Lord as their only fountain of living waters, either in doctrine or practice, in faith or in order, in departing from the precepts, ordinances or spirit of the gospel of our salvation.

The special charge implied against Jerusalem was that she trimmed her way, or shaped her course with a view to seek the applause of the world, or to seek love. Not satisfied with the love of God which passeth knowledge, which is unspeakable and full of glory, but seeking for the illicit love of strangers. Jerusalem, in the type stood in matrimonial relation to the Lord, and hence whenever she went into idolatry, or after other gods, or whenever she fell in love with and worshiped the works of her own hands, she was charged with the crime of adultery. So the New Jerusalem which John saw coming down from God out of heaven, was called the bride, the Lamb's wife, and bound by the most solemn obligations of fidelity to our Lord Jesus Christ, bound to love and serve him only, and to be satisfied with his love. When, therefore, the church or any of her branches become fascinated with the world, or the fashions thereof, and desirous to become popular and pleasing to the world, or to be in league with Antichrist, her desire betrays an adulterous inclination. When that inordinate desire predominates, she shapes her course, or trims her way to seek their applause, and secure their love, although the Husband of the bride has plainly admonished her, that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Can he whose love for his bride was so great that he for her sake became poor, that he bare her sins in his own body, that he gave himself for her, that he might redeem her from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; can he whose love for his bride was stronger than death, be satisfied with the divided affections of his bride in return? Or will he allow her to seek for love among strangers? Except a man hate his father and mother, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple, saith the Redeemer. It may seem strange that the bride of the Lamb of God should ever find it in her heart to depart from him when well she knows that in his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore, but so it is; though the ox knoweth his owner, and the stupid ass his master's crib, yet Israel doth not know, the Lord's people do not consider.

But let us consider the symptoms of inconstancy: How do churches, when in pursuit of unlawful love, trim their way? Their legitimate way is the way of holiness, it is to follow the footsteps of Christ, it is to worship God in the Spirit, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and to have no confidence in the flesh, but to be pleasing and fascinating to strangers, her ways require trimming. This term implies both cutting off and putting on. As when we trim a tree or a vine we lop off some or all its natural branches, but when we trim a dress, or a person, or a house, or carriage, we put on such ornaments as we may fancy will please the taste and command the admiration of beholders. The term in both applications is appropriate in setting forth the degeneracy of churches, and individual christians when *suffered* to depart from the simplicity of the gospel in order to gain the applause of the world, or to be at peace with anti-Christ.

First, there is a lopping off. We perceive that those whose treacherous love and favor we are lusting after, cannot bear our way, as it has been plainly marked out in the divine rule, and as long as we so tenaciously contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, we cannot have their

company; we must be a little and despised flock, our name must be cast out as evil, and we must be regarded as the offscouring of all things; and in that case, the noble ones of the earth, the learned, the wealthy and the great, will not mingle with us; but if we will trim our way by avoiding those things which never fail to make diviners angry, say less about the divine sovereignty of God, the total depravity and utter inability of men, lop off eternal unconditional election, predestination, the special irresistible work of God in regeneration, the infallibly efficacious calling of all the chosen and redeemed people of our God, and the special atonement of Christ, as being exclusively for the elect, and even if we are obliged to believe in our hearts that all these are clearly demonstrated in the Bible, as the truth of God, still quit giving offence to the enemy by preaching them publicly; trim a little and perhaps we may convince the world that we are not quite so bad as they have taken us to be. When we have succeeded in trimming down the preaching so as to prevent any offensive doctrine to ring from our pulpits we may next set about trimming the ordinances. Baptism as instituted by Christ himself is objected to by those whose love we court, but what they have substituted in its place is so modified as to suit the world. Then as we would gain the esteem of strangers, let nothing be heard in defense of truth, nor in opposing or exposing error on that, or on any other subject. And as the world regards us as too tight-laced in regard to our communion, so long as we exclude from the table all unbaptized persons, and all others who do not walk in the faith and order of the divine rule, by being more accommodating, we may fill up our churches, and compare favorably in members and in respectability with other denominations around us. It has been the practice of the gospel church in all ages to require an evidence of a regenerated state of all whom they admit to baptism and church membership, but if we would please the world that practice must also be trimmed, and if applicants cannot enter in among us by the door, what harm, if we just let them climb up some other way?

One source of annoyance to the strangers in the untrimmed way of Zion has always been that our watchmen, whom God has set up on the walls, have been in the habit of sounding an alarm whenever they have seen the enemy approaching. How uncourteous that practice seems! Why not let them come, who knows but they would be good friends, if we would only let them come in peaceably? When we see the wolf coming, if he has wrapped himself snugly in sheep's clothing, does not that show that he loves the sheep, and desires their company? Why then scare them away by our alarm; who knows but what if we let them in, they will conclude to become sheep themselves some day? Can there be any reasonable doubt that this kind of trimming would cause the offence of the cross to cease? And if the world cannot be persuaded to join the church, the church would join the world, and so the distinction so much complained of would cease.

As *trimming* implies a putting on as well as trimming off, it may imply such decorations as the carnal mind may suggest to attract the attention and fascinate those who could never appreciate the beauty of the church of God as her Savior has arrayed her. In Isaiah 3:16-23, the daughters of Zion are described in their fancy trimmings, haughtily walking with stretched forth necks, and wanton eyes, mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet, displaying the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains and the bracelets and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings and the nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils, etc. Inspired wisdom has employed the foregoing figures to set forth the folly and wickedness of the church, or any of her daughters, or branches, when dissatisfied with the garments of salvation in which God has clothed his church, and desiring to be fashionable, and to please the world, and to allure and draw to her embrace those who have never passed from death unto life, she trims her ways to seek love.

Look at some branches of the church which stood on gospel grounds forty years ago, were *then* satisfied to dwell alone and not be reckoned with the nations. Where are they today? Abroad and seeking love. See how they are lumbered down with tinkling ornaments, with Missionary Societies, Tract Societies, Sabbath School Unions, Theological Schools, and educated ministry, cringing to Antichrist, and mincing as they go to seek for proselytes. Why have they put on all the fashionable institutions common to the daughters of Babylon, if it be not to seek love, aye, forbidden love? Their necks are stretched forth with haughtiness as they mince along, tinkling with the ornaments of their feet to attract the adulterous gaze of a wicked and adulterous generation. In short, everything attached to the name of religion, which is not divinely authorized by the great Head of the church, has been thus put on, by way of trimming, whether it be in doctrine or practice, and all to secure popularity, to make converts, to fill up churches, and gratify a wicked propensity to worship the works of men's hands.

Wherefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways? Many, if not all, of these tinkling ornaments, especially Sunday and Theological Schools, Bible Classes, Tracts and Missionary Societies, are put on for the avowed purpose of *teaching the wicked her ways*. That is, for teaching religion, for saying every man to his neighbor, and every man to his brother, "Know the Lord." The professed object is to make converts, to evangelize the heathen, and teach the ways of Zion to the world.

We might enlarge upon this subject, but our time and space will not allow us to pursue the application of the figures in all their bearing. But in closing our remarks, suffer a word of admonition. To the ministers of the word, we would repeat the solemn warning given by the apostle, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (I Tim. 4:15) To the churches we would repeat the solemn warning, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8,9) "Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Gal. 5:7-9) To all the saints we would repeat the command of the Lord, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

Middletown, N. Y.,
January 15, 1862.

ISAIAH 11:1

Brother Beebe: – Please give your views on Isaiah 11:1: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Particularly the rod, and oblige an Inquiring Mind.

REPLY

Jesse was the father of David, the king of Israel, the anointed of the Lord, the man after God's own heart, and although we find nothing of a very extraordinary character recorded of Jesse as a man, yet as the father of David, and as a link in the pedigree of Christ, he occupies an important position among the types which pointed to the coming and work of our divine Redeemer. He is very prominently presented

in the text, his stem, rod, branch and roots are designed to set forth figurative the advent, kingdom, power and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The description of the rod and Branch in the succeeding part of this chapter can only apply to Christ as the anointed One.

Jesse, as we have remarked, was the father of David, according to the flesh. His stem may denote his extremity, as a stem is diminutive compared with the root, the trunk or the branch of a tree; so Jesse, as a man, was small among the thousands of Israel, or even of Judah, that from him should descend a lineage of powerful princes and kings, yet God was pleased to bring forth from his loins a succession of mighty rulers to sit upon the throne of Israel. The stem is exemplified in the anointing of David, when all the sons of Jesse had passed in review before the prophet of the Lord; the tall, athletic Eliab first. But the Lord said to Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, but Samuel said, "Neither hath the Lord chosen this." Then Shammah passed before the prophet, but he was not the man. And "Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these:" Thus all the towering branches of Jesse were rejected. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, and anoint him: for this is he." While the strong and stately boughs were refused, this youngest and most diminutive son, the very stem, was chosen of the Lord to sit upon the throne, and rule the tribes of Israel. A *rod* is used in the Scriptures to signify power and divine authority. As Moses demonstrated his divine commission by the rod with which he wrought wonders in the land of Ham, and at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, at the rock in Horeb, and throughout his history. The rod of Aaron and his sons was used when Dathan and others contested the priesthood, and brought their rods arid laid them before the Lord; while all their rods were barren and fruitless, that of the divinely authorized priesthood blossomed, and brought forth almonds, and it was laid up in the Ark, as a memorial before the Lord. Hence we see in the anointing of David, and his brilliant reign over Israel, what a rod of strength God brought from the very stem of Jesse. From this stem of Jesse, David, a long succession of kings were raised up to wield the sceptre, and bear the rod of government; and from his roots a royal branch was developed in the house of David. Thus the development of the stem of Jesse, in the person of David, became a spreading and fruitful Branch, far excelling Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah, or any of the seven sons of Jesse which to the prophet's eye were at the first appearance more imposing than the stripling shepherd boy.

Thus far we have only considered our subject in its literal bearing, as applicable to David and his house, but the surpassing glory of our subject is only found in him who is the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star. David was an eminent type of Christ, and so clearly prefigured him in his whole history that Christ is frequently called David; for he being both the Root and the Offspring, he was David's Son, and David's Lord. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David." "For David speaketh concerning him, [Christ] I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life," etc. But David is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He seeing this before, spake of the

resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.” (Acts 2:25-31) David in prophesying of Christ, said, (Psalms 110:1-3) “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the *rod* of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,” etc. The rod of the Redeemer’s power, which God has sent out of Zion, answers to the rod of Moses, setting forth the investment of all power in heaven and in earth, in Christ; power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him. And as Moses in leading Israel subdued all their enemies, and wrought salvation in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Horeb and in the wilderness with his rod, so Christ shall rule in the midst of his enemies, and break them to pieces, as a potter’s vessel. (Psalms 2:9; Rev. 2:27) This *rod* of Christ’s strength also answers to that of Aaron and his sons, signifying the oath by which he is made a priest, not by the law of a carnal commandment, but by the power of an endless life; and shewing also the success of his priesthood, in that the power of his atonement blossoms and bears fruit. It is also antitypical of the *rod* of David’s regal or kingly strength, by which he was established on the throne of Israel, by which his holy anointing, his divine commission and reigning power were demonstrated. So Christ in demonstration of his high authority referred the Jews to the works which he had performed. See John 5:36,37: “The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.” The rod of his strength, as the right sceptre of the spiritual government of his church, is laid up on the Ark of the Testament, as a memorial forever, and every son shall feel it. “For, whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that he receiveth;” and all shall have occasion to confess to him, “Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”

The stem of Jesse, out of which this rod should come, may refer to the time and circumstances of Christ’s advent. The *rod* in its application to David, as the *stem*, the smaller part of the family tree, grew to be a mighty branch, but like all natural branches of a tree, they taper to a mere stem; so at the time of Christ’s birth, the house of David had dwindled to a very small *stem*. Ichabod had been written, and the glory of the house of David, after the flesh, had faded, and very few of the lineal descendants of David were found, but still the promise of God was secure. It was written, “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.” (Micah 5:2) Here then we see, not what Doctor Watts calls “The stem of Jesse’s rod,” but what the Scriptures present as the rod of Jesse’s stem. For this rod came forth out of the stem of Jesse, according to our text.

“And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” Christ is frequently called a Branch. “Hear now, O, Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at; for behold, I will bring forth my servant, the *Branch*.” (Zech 3:8) Again, “Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the *Branch*: and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: 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.” (Zech. 6:12,13) (See also Psalms 80:15; Isaiah 4:2.) The man whose name is the Branch is the Messiah, and according to the prophecy has grown out of the roots of Jesse. The roots of a tree are the parts which literally lie buried in the earth. So at the time of Christ’s advent Jesse and nearly all his sons were in their graves, but notwithstanding the apparently hopeless condition of the family of Jesse, and “Although my house be not so with God; yet” saith David, “he hath made with me

an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is alt my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.” (II Samuel 23:5)

But it is said, “A Branch shall grow out of his *roots*.” In the sense of this subject, Jesse has a plurality of roots; as also it is written of David, “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” (Rev. 22: 16) In this application of the figure the root signifies the germ, or origin from which the tree grows, and the roots of Jesse may here denote, in their two-fold application, the natural and the spiritual origin of David. First, after the flesh, it was in Jesse; as David was literally the son of Jesse, after the flesh. Second, his spiritual origin and life was immediately from God. And Christ in his Messiahship developed both these roots, growing out of them. First, as the Son of God he descended from heaven; he proceeded and came from God. (John 8:42) He did not receive his divinity from Jesse, nor from David, but came down from heaven, and John saw and bare record that he was the Son of God. “And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) Hence his root, as to his divinity, was in the Father, in whom also is the root and source of all spiritual life and immortality of the church through him. For this life was with the Father, and was manifested. (I John 1:2) “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (I John 5:11) And when Jesus had finished his meditorial work on the earth he said to Mary, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” (John 20: 17) “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself like-wise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” (Heb. 2:10-17)

We have endeavored to show that the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ was from his own self-existent, independent and eternal Godhead, and that the spiritual life of Jesse, of David, and of all the saints, is from the same divine root, fountain or source, and that in being made flesh, or manifested in the flesh, he evidently sprang out of Juda, through the loins of Jesse and David. So that although he was David’s Son after the flesh, he was David’s Lord, David’s Root, and the Horn of his and of our salvation.

Volumes might be written on this sublime subject, but what we here present we hope may meet the desire of an “Inquiring Mind,” and be blessed to the edification of all who love the truth.

Middletown, N. Y.,
February 1, 1862.



ROMANS 13:11

Brother Beebe: – Please give your views on Romans 13:11, “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

Eliz. Brice.

Junius, N. Y., January 18, 1862.

REPLY

Our Redeemer said of the Pharisees and Sadducees, “Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” (Matthew 16:3) But the apostle implies that the saints addressed in our text know the times. There are times in the spiritual kingdom, as well as in nature, for every purpose of God to be accomplished. In nature there is seed time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, and as the wise man has said, There is a time for all things under the sun: a time to be born, and a time to die: a time to sleep, and a time to awake: a time to be merry, and a time to mourn. So in the spiritual kingdom, everything is appropriate in its appointed season. When the Bridegroom is present is not the time to fast; but when he is absent then the children of the bride-chamber shall fast. The time indicated for the church of God to buckle on the armor and confront the enemy, is very inappropriate for her to sleep. Paul says to the Thessalonians, “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Thess. 5:1-9) The time for sleeping, drunkenness and rebellion, was with us when under the power of darkness, before we were translated into the marvelous light of the kingdom of Christ; but now in our manifestation as the children of the light, it does not become us to sleep, as do others. When christians do sleep, in a spiritual sense, it is with them a time of darkness, as their fleshly powers are carnal and worldly, so the powers of darkness on them produce drowsiness, inactivity, stupor and insensibility, in regard to the things of the kingdom. All this Paul says the saints know perfectly. Therefore, knowing the time, they were aware that with them it was high time to awake out of sleep. When men sleep, their mind wanders at random in baseless visions and unreal dreams. So christians, when at ease in Zion, layoff their armor and become vain in their imaginations, and their minds are with the fool’s eyes, traversing the ends of the earth. When we have taken on us the name of Christ, have renounced the hidden things of darkness, it is time to awake, to watch and be sober, and never be caught sleeping on our post.

The admonitions given to the saints in this chapter show that the saints are surrounded with manifold temptations, and liable to be overcome of evil; whereas, they are exhorted to overcome evil with good. In their relations to the world, in the revolutions and changes of earthly governments, let every soul be subject to the higher powers, as children to parents, servants to masters, as citizens to rulers, knowing the powers that be are ordained of God, and we cannot resist them without resisting the ordinance of God; for, he says, in the third verse, “Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.” “Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” After setting forth many of the obligations which rest on christians, he says, “If there be any other commandment, it is briefly

comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” He then adds, “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” From the connection we infer that the saints in regard to some of these obligations, had been sleeping, dreaming, or inattentive, if not directly violating these precepts, they had neglected them, or had failed to discharge them with that degree of assiduity and promptitude which their importance demanded. As an incentive to vigilance, the apostle not only shows the liability of the saints to fall into temptation, and be drawn into present difficulties, but he urges the approximation of the day of the Lord, or the day of their deliverance from all the cares, duties, responsibilities, trials, vexations and turmoils of this mortal life.

“For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” The term salvation in this text, means deliverance. The apostle says, Rom. 8:19, “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God;” and in the same connection adds, “And not only they, [the whole creation] but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth ye yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” Thus the salvation which is nearer than when we believed, is that wherein we are saved by hope, the redemption of our body from a mortal to an immortal state; when death shall be swallowed up of victory; when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall be clothed in immortality. That happy period, that glorious day is drawing near, and is now nearer than when we believed; that is, it is nearer now than it was when we first became believers. You have progressed thus far in your pilgrimage; you are thus far nearer to your great deliverance, “the night is far spent;” your struggles, toils and labors will soon be over; “the day is at hand,” the perfect day, when clouds shall no more obscure the Sun, nor hide from you the refulgent glories of your inheritance above. This being the case, “Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provisions for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

Middletown, N.Y.,
February 1, 1862.

REMARKS ON REVELATION 13:8

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

With much fear and trembling, we venture to write such views as we have on the subject proposed for our consideration; not however, because we must necessarily cross and controvert the expositions which have been given by the learned and the great who have been admired by the literary and religious world, nor yet because we are conscious that our views will subject us to the reproach and ridicule of ungodly men; but because the subject is deep and mysterious, as well as grand and sublime.

We have never attempted to explain the dark imagery presented in the visions of John upon the Isle of Patmos without feeling an unusual sense of our littleness, while amazed at the awful grandeur therein embodied. No amount of study, no application of the intellectual powers of the human mind can ever approximate a solution of the things set forth in the vision, any farther than they are opened to our understanding by him who alone of all in heaven or on earth was able to take the book, and open the seals thereof.

Before entering upon the immediate subject of the text, we call the attention of our readers to the demonstration in this book of the Omniscient wisdom and irrevocable purposes of Almighty God, both of which we are compelled to admit, or failing to admit, we must reject the whole book of Revelation as a heaven-inspired record of the truth of God. Were it possible that any event in the future, however distant or complicated, was hidden from the Omniscience of Jehovah, this vision could not be relied on as setting forth things which should certainly come to pass in the precise and exact order indicated by the striking figures which John saw, and interpretations given him by the angel of the Lord. And were not the whole chain of events foreshadowed in this book, absolutely ordained by him who has declared the end from the beginning, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," it could not have been with certainty declared hundreds of years in advance, what should, or what should not come to pass.

Let the reader then decide at once whether he will reject this book as a revelation from God – as its name and title claims – or admit that God has settled in his purpose and decrees, unalterably and forever, all the events which are here declared should be fulfilled both in the history of the church and people of God, and in the development of the man of sin, the son of perdition, that wicked, whose coming is after the working of Satan – with all signs and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. The exact limits set to every development of anti-christ, whether, as the great red dragon; the beast that rose out of the sea; the beast that rose out of the earth; the image of the beast; the scarlet colored beast; the mistress of abominations on whose forehead is indelibly written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth, assigning to each of these characters their exact rise, career, duration, and final overthrow. Showing with the minutest accuracy exactly when and to what extent they should annoy, worry, persecute, or slaughter the saints of God; and by what signal displays of Almighty power God would preserve his church in the face of all the combined powers of wicked men and devils, and curb, restrain, and finally destroy all the elements of opposition, and finally bring his bride elect in triumph to the skies. How exceedingly limited are the views of those who hold that God's purpose and decrees, his wisdom, government and ordination, embrace only the good actions of men; when it is expressly written, "There is none that doeth good; no, not one." How truly it is written, "The fool hath said, There is no God." We cannot admit his being and deny that he reigns in the armies of heaven and over all the inhabitants of earth. If his government and foreordination does not set bounds to the wicked actions of men and devils – how shall we read our text? Almost two thousand years ago God gave this very revelation to Jesus Christ, as Head of the church, to show unto his servants, and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; and commanded John to write it in a book for the use of his churches. The text does not read as though the things declared were unsettled, unfixed, or uncertain. The immutable God by his angel signifies to John, (see Chapter 1:1,2) "And all that dwell upon the earth *shall* worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Is it possible to deny the foreordination of God and admit the truth of this text? Or is it possible to deny the truth of this text without making him a liar who sent and signified it to John?

First – In offering some remarks on the text we propose to notice briefly the character or thing that shall be worshiped.

Second – The people and their locality who shall worship him.

Third – The clearly implied reservation of a remnant according to the election of grace, who shall not worship him.

Fourth – The obvious reason why they shall not worship him; their names being written in the Book of Life, etc.

Fifth – Some testimony of the Lamb – his Book of Life, and in what sense the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

First – The character or thing that shall be worshiped. To it the personal pronoun him is applied in our text. The antecedent to this pronoun is unmistakably given in the context, as the beast which John saw rise up out of the sea, when he stood upon the sand of the sea, and which he describes as having seven heads, and ten horns. Thus far his description is similar to that of the great red dragon mentioned in the preceding chapter, and which gave to this sea-monster his seat and power and great authority. The dragon, however, had his seven crowns upon his heads, but the beast wears them upon his ten horns. And this beast which John saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were like as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. What an ugly looking monster to be worshiped! Who would suppose his admirers would be so numerous that that devotion to him would ever become so popular in the world? But so it was ordained. They should not only worship him but the same class of worshipers should also worship the dragon which gave power to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” Here the words of our text follow: “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship *him*.” Him who had seven heads and ten horns, who was like the leopard, the bear, and whose mouth was like that of a lion, him whose lion-like mouth blasphemed God, his Name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. *Him* who made war with and overcame the saints, him whose time was limited to forty and two months. This complicated monster, this amalgamation of all that is brutal, savage, ravenous, carnivorous, and terrible, is the deified idol at whose shrine nations should bow down, and all the tribes of the earth with the exception only of those mentioned in our text shall worship. This mystic beast was used to *signify* to John one of the multiform phases of the *man of sin*.

It is supposed that in the classification of the various organized forms of anti-christian power, the dragon is used to denote the Pagan, and this beast to represent the Papal form of organized and legal persecution brought to bear against the church and kingdom of our God and his Christ; and that numerous other striking figures are used in the apocalypse to denote the Mohammedan, the Protestant, and all other prominent forms of opposition to be encountered by the people of the saints of the Most High God. We shall not be able in this article, nor will we be expected to trace out the full analogy of these figures; but we shall adopt the application of the figure of the beast which is to be worshiped so very extensively – as signifying the Papal anti-christ, which succeeded the Pagan dragon, and was inaugurated at Rome, in the seat formerly occupied by the dragon under the Pagan government of that vast empire, and installed in the great power and imperial authority of the dragon, when the first Papal Pontif was elevated as Universal Bishop at or about the year A.D. 606, having forty and two months,

according to our context, to continue. These forty and two months agree with the thousand, two hundred and three score days, in which God's two witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, according to Rev. 11:3. Allowing thirty days to a month, the forty and two months amount to one thousand two hundred and three score days. And this according to the computation of time signified by Daniel's seventy weeks, and other like figures, give each day to signify one year; and allowing this application of time, and the correctness of historical data that the Papal anti-christ was organized and its forty and two months began at A.D. 606, its termination, together with the slaying of the two witnesses, may be expected by A.D. 1866, as 1260 added to 606 will amount to that term. Truly the time seems to be at hand, and the general upheaving of the nations of the earth and more especially the recent stripping of the Pope of his secular power over many mighty nations, favors the conclusion that the Papal supremacy will expire by the end of the next four years. And if we do not greatly mistake current indications, the Civil War now raging in our own beloved country is preparing the way for the slaying of the two witnesses, simultaneously with the downfall of the Papacy in the old world. But –

Secondly – Who are to worship this beast? All who dwell upon the earth, whose names are not written in the Book of Life, etc. From the Roman Empire Papal missionaries were sent forth into all the nations, tribes, and kindreds of the earth and the world wondered after the beast. “All that dwell upon the earth,” not only expresses the general spread of Popery into all the nations and tribes of men; but according to the context, those of all classes of the children of men. In the sixteenth verse, we are told that the image of the beast, when it received life, causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, and in their foreheads. And in verse twelve, “He causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed.” The first beast is the one which is spoken of in our text, and is called the first in distinction from the beast which John beheld coming up out of the earth, with two horns like a lamb, which spake as a dragon. But there seems to be something peculiarly expressive in regard to their locality; they *dwell upon the earth*. The true church of God is throughout this vision represented as dwelling in heaven. Their life, or spiritual vitality is hid with Christ in God. Their conversation is in heaven; for they are risen with Christ. And in the verse immediately preceding our text, they are said to dwell in heaven. But all religionists, whose religion is earthly, sensual, and devilish, are appropriately said to dwell, not in heaven, but on the earth. They are themselves of the earth, earthly, and all the religion originating from their resolutions, wills, and works, has its source or fountain in the earth; and as they live religiously on their earthly doctrines, rites, ceremonies, and performances, they dwell upon the earth. They are not built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles of the Lord, but upon the earth which is to be consumed. And their dwelling is defended by earthly power, force, and authority. Instead of trusting in the Lord they confide in armies and navies, emperors and kings. And instead of the armor of God and the salvation which God has appointed for walls and bulwarks for his Zion, the weapons of their warfare are carnal. Their munitions are oppression, disfranchisement, confiscation, prisons, dungeons, racks, tortures, gibbets, stakes, flames, and fagots. Their arguments are edicts and decrees, thundered from the thrones of monarchs or from the Sea of Rome. Their dwelling is in every sense upon the earth, and all such dwellers on the earth, whether they be small or great, rich or poor, bond or free, must worship the beast by acknowledging his assumed supremacy, looking to him for pardon of sin, by applying to him his blasphemous titles – His Holiness – Head of the Church – Christ's Vicar, and by according to him the right to represent by his triple crown, that the power of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is vested in him, together with all power on earth, ecclesiastic and civil, and that he is divinely commissioned to reign over the kings of the earth, and to lord it over the heritage of the Lord. But it must not be understood that all who worship this beast are members of the Roman Catholic

commission – for this chapter shows conclusively that all who belong to the organization of the second beast, and all embraced in the image of the beast are included as dwelling upon the earth, as having the mark of this beast, and the number of his name. If the beast that rose up out of the sea was Popery, the beast coming up out of the earth must signify the Protestant anti-christ; and the image of the beast which rose out of the sea is set up by Protestantism and presents a *fac simile* of the original, which we have in striking exactness in the numerous unscriptural religious organizations set up by the various Protestant branches of modern anti-christ for the evangelization of the world, and which claim the right to supervise the constituted governments of the world, and in its insatiable thirst for human blood. Rev. 14:9-11 – The third angel proclaimed the dreadful doom of all the worshipers of the beast, “Saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Thirdly – We were to notice the reservation of those whose names are written in the book of life. In the next chapter we are told that these, instead of dwelling upon the earth, stood with the Lamb upon Mount Sion. That the number of them was an hundred and forty and four thousand, and beside these, as we are elsewhere told was an innumerable company which no man can number which were redeemed out of every kindred and tribe and nation. These have the seal of God the Father written in their foreheads. These all sang the new song, which no man could learn but those which were redeemed from the earth. That is, from where they once dwelt with others on the earth; but they are redeemed from the earth and then they learn to sing the new song before the throne. We have a copy of this song in Rev. 15:3. It is called 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,” etc. While all the worshipers of the beast sing great and marvelous are the works of men, the powers of men, the agency of men, and the efficiency of the institutions of men for the redemption of the world; while they worship the beast, the works of their own hands, and glory in their shame, they cry, “Who is like unto the beast: who is able to make war with the beast.” But they can never learn to appreciate the great and marvelous works of the Lord God Almighty, nor to acknowledge the justice and truth of the ways of the King of saints. Those whom God has redeemed from the earth, who are taught of God thus to sing and ascribe all power and majesty to God, are further described by, “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: These were redeemed from among men, etc. We cannot sustain this character, and yet worship the beast and carry his mark. If we follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, we shall not run ahead and ask him to follow with his approbation and blessing what we have devised, invented or done. These are they that follow him in the regeneration; he going before them in that work, and they following after him. When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and they follow him; but a stranger they will not follow for they know not the voice of strangers. They follow him in the baptismal grave, into the wilderness, in sore temptations and deliverances; they follow him into the sheepfold, by the door, without trying to climb up some other way. They take his yoke on them and learn of him, for he is meek and lowly. They bear his image – imitate his examples – obey his precepts, and depend on him alone as their only Savior, their Prophet, Priest, and King. And as they follow, he leadeth them into green pastures and unto living fountains of water. He leads them in a way they know not, and in paths they have not known; but they have the assurance that all the way he

leads them is the right way; for they have learned to sing most sweetly – “Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” They are preserved from worshiping the beast, as the Lord’s hidden ones were from bowing to Baal in the days of Elijah. “I have reserved seven thousand who have not bowed the knee unto Baal” And Paul, after referring to this reservation, adds, “Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works,” etc. (Rom. 11:5,6) The sovereignty of God is vindicated while he in righteousness discriminates, choosing the delusions of the ungodly, and leaving them in their madness to believe a lie that they all may be damned who have pleasure in unrighteousness and believe not the truth. “But we are bound to give thanks unto God, for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because he hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.” (II Thess. 2:11-12) This people the Lord says he has formed for himself, and they shall shew forth his praise. He will put his fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from him; and he will not turn away from them, to do them good. He will never leave them, nor forsake them.

Fourthly – The obvious reason why they shall not worship the beast is that God has chosen them from the beginning unto salvation. He has chosen them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. “And the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.” Jesus says, “I know my sheep, and am known of mine.” And they are registered in the book of life. They are written among the living in Jerusalem. Their walls are continually before the Lord, for he has engraven their name upon the palm of his hands: and lest any hurt them he will keep them night and day. For the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the wicked unto the day of judgment to be punished. The reason why they do not worship the beast, nor wonder after him, nor look to him for salvation, or ascribe any saving power to him, is that God has taught them better. And every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto Christ, and him that cometh unto Christ he will in no wise cast out. He will raise them up at the last day. They are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. In thy Book all my members were written. And none can erase the names of Jesus’ members from the book of life of the Lamb. God has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son; and in that image they shall be raised up at the last day. As for them, they shall behold his face in righteousness, and be satisfied when they awake with his likeness.

Lastly – We proposed to offer some further remarks concerning the Lamb – his book of life, and attempt to show in what sense he was slain from the foundation of the world. A most ample and precious cluster of names and titles have been chosen and employed by the Holy Ghost to set forth the person, offices, work, and relations which our Lord Jesus Christ bears towards his people. Perhaps of them all, none is more interesting to the saints than that of the Lamb, the Lamb of God, the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne, the Lamb that stands upon Mount Sion, etc. As a figure, the lamb is the most harmless, innocent, and meek of all the animal creation. Hence they were frequently used under the Old Testament dispensation to prefigure our divine Redeemer who is holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens. But in the types, the lambs to be so used must be the firstlings of the flock, for Jesus was in all things to have the preeminence. They must be without blemish, for they were used to point to him who knew no sin; to him who was spotless, innocent, pure, and immaculate. They were used in sacrifice to signify that the Lamb of God was to be offered for the sins of his people. Abraham said unto Isaac that God would provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So Jesus is called the Lamb of God, the Lamb which God has provided, and on whom he has laid the iniquity of all his people. His book of life is not a book composed of paper or parchment, which might be consumed by

fire, or its records effaced by passing ages, but it is figurative language. As when we wish to make a matter certain, record it; so in the archives of eternity, in the volume of God's book it is written, or in other words, made certain by the irrevocable choice, purpose, promise and decree of the unchangeable God, all the members of Christ's body, his substance, which was not hidden from the eyes of God. The book of life of the Lamb, in the sense in which the words are used in our text, are probably to be understood the same as where they are used in Rev. 22, as a record of those who have been brought into the fellowship of his organized church, in its gospel form. As in the old Jerusalem, a registry was kept, of the names of the living inhabitants of that city, so in the New Jerusalem, or the gospel church, those who are received into fellowship on profession of faith are enrolled among the living in the anti-typical Jerusalem.

As a Lamb, he is spoken of as having been slain from the foundation of the world; that his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. And all his sufferings, and death, were summed up in the divine mind from everlasting. There is no room to doubt; but we understand the expression here used to mean more particularly that he was set forth in the types and figures used from the foundation of the world, by the figure of the slain Lamb. At the early dawn of the creation Abel saw, by faith, the bleeding, dying Lamb of God, through the figure of the innocent firstling of his flock, which he offered, and which provoked the wrath of Cain. And from that period forth until the crucifixion of Christ, lambs were used by the patriarchs, and by the Levitical priesthood, to set forth the crucified Redeemer. A remarkable instance is given in the redemption of Israel from the house of bondage, when the Passover was instituted in Egypt; its blood sprinkled upon lintels and door posts of their dwellings, and its flesh roasted with fire and eaten with bitter herbs, only by the Hebrews, on the night of their deliverance. But we will not extend this already lengthy article by referring to all the lambs which were sacrificed from the foundation of the world; but barely remark that in them all the Savior, the Lamb of God, was evidently set forth crucified among them.

John was enabled to identify and bear record, or testimony, of Christ as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; which all the blood of victims slain before could not do. By one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified. In this case there is remembrance of sin made against them no more; for his blood cleanseth us from all guilt, from all pollution and sin. And Peter admonishes the redeemed saints thus, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." (I Peter 1:18-21)

Middletown, N. Y.,
February 15, 1862.



REVELATION 20:11-14

It would afford us much pleasure to be able to explain satisfactorily all the scriptures which are presented by our readers, who ask for our views on them. Frequently, however, the subjects on which we are requested to enlighten others prove to be the same on which we feel sensible that we are also in the dark. We, however, sometimes attempt to give some views on passages in the scriptures under an embarrassing consciousness of our utter inability to do justice to the subject; but hoping that what we write may be carefully and prayerfully compared with the standard of truth; and only received so far as it is clearly sustained by the word and spirit of our divine Lord and Master. We feel that a weighty responsibility rests on us. What we write is read by thousands – some of whom are very babes in the kingdom – some are weak, but confiding, and may, perhaps, be misguided, and led to form wrong conclusions from what we write; and a sense of our own liability to err in these important matters would deter us from writing at all, if it were not a settled truth that God has used the weak things of this world for the comfort and edification of his children; and that frequently a word spoken in fear and much trembling has been directed by the gracious Spirit of truth to the comfort of the little ones of the spiritual household.

There is much expressed in this chapter on which we would not dare at this time to offer any comments; and on the verses named by our sister we will not attempt to give a full explanation. What we may be enabled to write, we wish to have regarded only as general remarks, showing just what is asked for, namely, *Our views on the text*. Whether our views are right or wrong, the text can not be wrong. The scriptures are inspired by the Holy Ghost, and are the infallible truth of God. What we may think of them, though we greatly desire to entertain only correct views, is liable to be incorrect. Just so far, but no further, as we are taught their meaning by the Spirit that inspired them, we are right; and God will himself vindicate and sustain his own truth as taught by his Spirit.

The language of our text is awfully grand and sublime. “*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them.*” This throne is undoubtedly the one of which our Redeemer spake when he said, “When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory,” he would put his sheep on his right hand, and say unto them, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” It was mentioned in Old Testament prophecy as a glorious high throne from the beginning, and the place of the sanctuary of the saints of God. In the second Psalm God has said, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.” And again unto the Son he saith, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” It is here presented to the vision of John as a *great throne*, signifying its boundless power in heaven and in earth; power over all flesh, and power over sin, death, hell and the grave; power to do all his pleasure in all the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth. A special allusion may here be intended to his having taken to him his great power and had reigned in the destruction of the beast and of the false prophet, and all the powers of darkness. This throne is not only great, but it is white, which is emblematic of immaculate purity. The King presiding upon it “reigns in righteousness.” The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre. He loves righteousness and he hates iniquity, and therefore, he is crowned with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Justice and judgment are the habitation of this throne, and, therefore, righteousness and truth goes before the face of its august occupant. Could all the records of time and eternity be searched with an omniscient scrutiny, not a spot of wrong, not a blemish of injustice could be fastened upon this great white throne. This throne, or power, is the almighty power of God, and it has always been a great white throne; but perhaps never before so fully manifested to men in the flesh as when John, on this occasion, saw it. He saw not a vacant throne, or a throne

unoccupied; but he saw him that sat upon it: the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the Only wise God our Savior. He saw the only and blessed Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality dwelling in the light; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; whom no man can approach unto, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen. (I Tim. 6:16)

“From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.” How supremely gloriously must he be, from whose presence earth and heaven recedes, and vanishes away! What must be the transcendent glory, which at once puts out the sun, the moon, the stars, and wipes out at once the glory of the earth and skies. When he appears, what little things these worlds become; they seem as less than nothing and vanity. The fleeing away of the earth and heaven may be considered in a three-fold application.

First – In relation to the figurative elements, or rather the terms as figuratively used throughout this vision of John in which the earth has been so generally used to signify all religious, and religious institutions which have not their origin in God; and the heaven is used to denote the militant church, where Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and from which the dragon was vanquished, drawing with his tail the third part of the stars of this heaven, which were with him cast into earth. The scene presented here to John shows the consummation of the militant, (or warfare state of the church). She comes up out of all her great tribulations, and appears now as a bride adorned and fully prepared for her husband. At his appearance all the jarring elements of the old man and the new man, flesh and spirit, church and world, truth and error, at once are driven away, like shades of night when the rising sun appears.

Second – Whenever and wherever a revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ is made, experimentally, on his great white throne, the earth and heaven recedes from our view, and there is no place found for them. When he was transfigured on the mount the disciples were so fully enraptured that they had no room in their full hearts for any thing more. They were unconscious of any thing more than what they saw. They were cut loose from the world and the elements thereof, and so totally eclipsed by the surpassing glory of his presence, they fled away. So Paul, when caught up to the paradise of God, and saw the splendor of the eternal throne, was released for the time being from a consciousness of the elements of this world. So Stephen, when to his faith the heavens were opened, seemed totally indifferent to the tortures inflicted upon his body, lost sight of personal injuries so madly heaped on him, and in an ecstasy cried, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And so in the experience of all the saints, just in proportions as Jesus is clearly revealed to our faith, and we are enabled to gaze upon the great white throne, and him that sits thereon, we are absorbed in the vision, and dismiss the world with its vanities, having no place for them under such happy circumstances. But,

Lastly – This language is used in connection with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and shall be fully realized when our God shall come in the glory of his majesty to raise the dead and judge the world, at the last day. The awful grandeur of that scene, who shall describe? The heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll – the elements of nature shall melt with fervent heat, and like a vesture shall they be folded and laid aside – the earth and sea shall be consumed, and there shall no place be found for them. If it were possible for the saints to take this world to heaven with them, it would only be in their way; it is in their way now; but Glory to God, in the highest, there shall no place be found for it in that bright world to which we go. Christ will be all in all, and not a saint in glory shall find in him a vacant place where he could store away the world, or room to set up a single idol.

“Had I a view of thee, my God!
Kingdoms and men would vanish soon;

Vanish as though I saw them not,
As a dim candle dies at noon.”

“*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.*” This seems to indicate a general resurrection of all mankind. The sea and death, and hell, or the grave, as the word hell in this place evidently means, delivered up the dead that were in them; so that without discrimination, the small and the great, alike are amenable to God, and all shall come forth at this call, obey his summons just as John saw them. In reality the dead and all the living always were before God, that is, they were always in his presence, or where he had a perfect knowledge of them; but this subject seems to manifest them as brought before his judgment throne, without distinction of grace or position, the small as well as the great; none so great as to claim exemption, none so small as to be overlooked.

“*And the books were opened, and another book, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.*” Finite beings require books and records to preserve a testimony of facts, because we are liable to forget; but God is infinite, and all things are naked and open to the view of him with whom we have to do; consequently we understand the books to be figuratively used in this subject. The purpose and fore-ordination of God is spoken of as a book in a figurative sense. “Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God.” The Book mentioned in the tenth chapter which was sealed, and none could unseal it or look upon it until the Lion of the tribe of Juda prevailed, was evidently metaphorical; and the unsealing of it signified the development of those things which are presented in this Book of Revelation. The books which are mentioned in our text seem to signify that God has an accurate and exact knowledge of all things. The secrets of all hearts are perfectly known to him, and when he shall disclose them, it will be like the opening of volumes in which all secrets of all ages are recorded. As the poet sings –

“Chain'd to his throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men;
With every angers form and size
Drawn by the eternal pen.”

Again, the books may signify the books of the scriptures, the book of the law which we have transgressed, and the judgments and decisions which are recorded in all the scriptures, in which we are told that “He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.” Paul says, “God will judge the world according to my gospel;” or as we understand him to mean, according to the testimony which Paul and other inspired men had before testified. So we may rest assured that however blind men may be as to the bearing of the divine testimony on this matter, in the final development which shall ultimately be made, the books shall be opened. The dead shall be judged out of those things, or according to those things, which are written in the books. We think no intelligent christians will dispute that the final and everlasting destiny of all men, both saints and sinners, will be in exact accordance with the testimony already written in the books of the inspired scriptures. No sinner will be doomed to hell but such as the scriptures already testify shall perish; nor will any be permitted to the blissful mansions of eternal day but those who are born again. Who all these are, none can tell, until the eternal Judge shall open the books, only so far as the saints have, by revelation of the spirit, been sealed, and have received the earnest of their incorruptible inheritance above. The judgment disclosed by the opening of the books of the Eternal Judge will be according to their works. The works of all unregenerate men are works of darkness, works of iniquity, works of the flesh, and by these works they now show that they are dead in sins, under the curse of the divine law, and unless the opening of the gospel book shall disclose some works which are wrought in Christ for them and in them, they must

certainly perish. If the tree is made good the fruits thereof will be good, and so witness the quality of the tree. But if the tree be evil, as all of us are by nature, if not made good by the cleansing blood of Jesus, and the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, the fruits will show that they are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. And when the sea shall deliver up its dead, and death and the grave shall deliver up their dead, they shall be judged, every man according to his works. Those who work for life, being dead, their works also are dead works, and they are called workers of iniquity. No man can bring a clean thing out of an unclean. It will not be denied that they have worked, but it shall assuredly be said to them, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." And all the saints whose works are wrought in God, and in whose hearts God has worked, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure, it shall as certainly be said, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"And death and hell (or the grave) were cast into the lake of fire." The last enemy to Christ and his people that shall be destroyed is death. Christ has destroyed death, and him that had the power of death; that is, the devil. O! death, I will be thy plague! O! grave (or hell), I will be thy destruction! Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes! He shall swallow up death in victory, and the resurrected saints shall put on immortality, and sing, "O! death, where is thy sting? O! grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The lake of fire into which death and the grave shall be cast, signify by strong figurative words their utter destruction. As fire is the most destructive element in nature, it is used to signify this final destruction.

"This is the second death." According to what is written in this chapter, in the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses, there is a *first death*, in which the just as well as the unjust participate; the death of our mortal bodies is alike. But the saints are, by participation in the first resurrection, delivered from the effects of the first death; that is, they have secured to them a happy resurrection, in immortal and spiritual bodies on which the second death can have no power.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." This book of life is the same which in the former part of our text is called "Another book, which is the book of life." It is also called the Lamb's book of life, written from the foundation of the world. And again it is called the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It is an ancient record; and all who on the opening of the books shall be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life are secure from the power of the second death. But all whose names are not so written in the Lamb's Book of Life, whatever else they may have relied upon for acceptance before the great white throne and before him who sits thereon, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, shall, with death and hell, be cast into the lake of fire; that is, they shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

We do not assume that this text has no allusion in its figurative design, to things which shall transpire before the final consummation of all earthly things; but we have given such views as we have, and pray that God may give us all that bright and more perfect understanding that we need, in due time.

Middletown, N. Y.,
February 15, 1862.

EXODUS 13:17, 18

“And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; but God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.”

When God delivered the Hebrews from the house of bondage and broke the Egyptian yoke of their captivity, his wisdom as well as power was most strikingly displayed. Such is the unlimited power of God that he could have released his people from bondage by the waving of his hand, or the utterance of a word; he could have instantly crushed the power of Egypt, and stripped the imperial throne of Pharaoh of all its regal strength, or he could have softened the heart of Pharaoh as easily as he could harden it: but his wisdom, as well as his omnipotence was to be demonstrated before the world. And having humbled Pharaoh and effected the release of the Israelites, he was able to conduct them in what way he pleased to their final destiny in the promised land. Having all power and all wisdom he was abundantly able to execute his design in any way that seemed good in his eyes. But in the redemption of Israel from the house of bondage, and their conduct through the wilderness, and their ultimate possession of the promised inheritance, God evidently designed to show forth the redemption of his chosen people from the bondage of the law and their ultimate entrance into the glorious liberty of the gospel. He therefore chose to lead them about. Instead of selecting the shortest route, or that in which the least impediments to their journeyings would require to be encountered, it was his pleasure, for a purpose worthy of himself, to lead them about in a circuitous and meandering course, which would constantly require the display of his power and wisdom, his cloud by day and his fire by night, to guide and protect them, and to show their entire dependence on him in every step of the way. Thus setting forth in the figure, first, that the salvation of his chosen people was in a way by him ordained, and their redemption from the curse, the bondage and dominion of the law, from the guilt, pollution and consequences of sin, and from the powers of death and hell, was altogether above the wisdom and power of men, and in a way in all respects baffling the wisdom and humbling the pride of the sons of men; showing that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Second, agreeing with the experience of all the saints, every saint can witness with the inspired psalmist that when God broke their yoke of bondage and released them, in a spiritual sense, from the grasp of Pharaoh, and set them free from their bondage; when he took them up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and put a new song in their mouth, and set their feet upon a rock, that he also established their goings. Had he allowed us to choose our own way, perhaps we would have desired to be conveyed by the nearest way, and on flowery beds of ease, immediately to the mansion of glory. Perhaps all the saints have struggled more or less against the way the Lord has been pleased to lead us about, especially when he has led us by the hand of Moses by the way of the Red Sea, hemmed in on every side, the sea before us, the enemy in hot pursuit behind, and towering mountains at the right and left. We, too, have murmured when led to the bitter waters of Meribah, and we were terribly afraid when he led us near to the mountain that might be touched only on pain of being thrust through with a dart, or destroyed. Like the Hebrews, we have feared that we were brought thus far to be destroyed, but still God has led us in a way which we knew not, and in paths we had not known. Truly he has found us in a waste howling wilderness, like Jacob, and he has led us about and instructed us, and yet he has kept us as the apple of his eye.

“God led them [the Hebrews] not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although it was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.” The Philistines were a people with whom Israel was never on good terms of friendship, they were enemies,

and always on the alert to draw them into difficulty, and bore about the same relation to Israel that the Arminians do to the church and people of God; and although, according to the natural geography of that country, a straight line from Egypt to Canaan would cross the land or territory of the Philistines, it was not the pleasure of the Lord to lead them that way, as it was a way of temptation too strong for the resistance and fidelity of the Hebrews, therefore to avoid the influence of the Philistines on the Israelites which God foresaw would have a tendency to ensnare them, and to bring them again into bondage, he led them by another way. How happy for the children of God is the lesson here taught, that God has established the goings of his redeemed people, and that he knows exactly what amount of temptations his grace shall enable us to bear, and orders our course accordingly. So it is said of the saints, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (I Corr. 10:13) God provides against all *peradventures*, chances or uncertainties, in all the provisions which he has made for the deliverance and salvation of his people. This form of expression cannot imply that there are *peradventures* or uncertainties with God, but that he has provided infallibly against them. He knew, as he only could know, what would have been the consequences if he had led them through the land of the Philistines: they must have seen war, and they would probably have been tempted to repent that they had left Egypt, and inclined to return thither. So in the way of life and salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, God has ordained that none can come to him but by Christ, who is the way; there is salvation in no other way. Men cannot be justified in God’s sight by any works of righteousness which they have performed, by any obedience to the law which they have or can render. When they are delivered from bondage and the yoke of their captivity is broken, the saints frequently show an inclination to lay their course through the land of the Philistines, that is, they have in them a natural inclination, after having received the Spirit, to be made perfect by the works of the flesh. The Arminian conditional system presents to their inexperienced eyes a smoother path, a shorter distance, and there are many allurements to draw them into the popular thoroughfares of the legal system, but God by his Spirit never leads his people in that way. Paul said to the Galatians, “This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.” If for any purpose God suffers his children to become entangled with the yoke of bondage, and to sojourn in the land of the Philistines, they always see war; for as certainly as the Spirit of truth is in them, they will find a principle of opposition to the corrupt principles and works of the flesh, and all the hosts of the Philistines will oppose the law of the Spirit of life which they possess, and all the powers of their flesh will adhere to the legal tendencies of the Philistine or Arminian doctrines, and, as the poet has very justly remarked, they

“Strive with a Do this and live,
To drive them to Egypt again.”

“But God led the people about.” He leads them, it is not his method to drive them. When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and they hear his voice, and they follow him, but a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. As God led the Israelites from Egypt, and through the wilderness, going before them in the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, so he goes before his spiritual Israel, by day and by night. Instead of scaring or lashing them along, after the Philistine or Arminian fashion, uncapping hell, and showing them the horrors of the damned, to urge them on, he goeth before, and causes them to behold in him such irresistible attraction that they feel sweetly constrained to follow where he leads. He gives them such confidence in his wisdom to lead them, that they desire no other leader, and their experience enables them to say, He leadeth me into green pastures, beside the still waters. But he leads them by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea,

not because that way is the nearest, or smoothest, or most flowery, but because in that way he will be glorified, and his people shall be taught many important lessons which they could not so well learn in any other way. What important lessons did he give them in the wilderness and at the Red Sea? How was his mighty power and discriminating grace displayed, when he made a path for them through the Red Sea, on dry ground, and when the same miracle by which their deliverance was accomplished, destroyed all their enemies? As he led the Hebrews, so he leads his spiritual people, often into wilderness trials, where the beasts of the forest prowl, and where their howlings sometimes alarm them, and to the sea where their way seems, to all human sight, cut off, the enemy advances, and they are hemmed in, and they think there is but a step between them and death, but how seasonably his help comes; his rod is extended, the sea divides, the way of escape is opened, and a song of deliverance breaks forth from their joyful tongues.

“The children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.” Not in the panoply of military warfare, for God himself fought their battles, and gave them victory. The manner of their harness is described in chapter 12:11, “And thus shall ye eat it [the passover]; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord’s passover.” In this manner of harness they ate the passover, and immediately left the land of Egypt, and their harness did not become old, or require to be repaired or replaced during the forty years of their pilgrimage in the wilderness. Here again we have a vivid figure of the way in which the Lord strips his people for the race, and in which he harnesses them for the christian warfare. They are not clad in the armor of men, in coats of mail, nor armed with implements of carnal warfare, for they are not to fight against flesh and blood; the warfare is a spiritual warfare, and their weapons are spiritual, and mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. They are well harnessed at the outset, for they have on the whole armor of God, having their loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and, above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith they shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph. 6:13-17) As the Israelites went up out of Egypt harnessed, and wore the same harness all the way in which the Lord their God did lead them until they had accomplished their whole journey and entered the promised land, so the redeemed family of God whom he has redeemed from sin, death and hell are called to be marshalled under the banner of the great Captain of their salvation, and all their armor is of God, their weapons are spiritual and mighty through grace, and they cannot decay or wax old, nor will they ever require to be superseded by any newly invented armor. As the Hebrews went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt, we may rest assured that not one of all the sons of Adam shall ever go up out of the land of Egypt, or be delivered from the house of bondage, in any other harness, nor without this harness. True, men may make profession of religion, they may display much zeal and courage, they may impose on the saints, but until God breaks their yoke, and puts on them the harness, they have no discharge from bondage, and can never know experimentally the glorious liberty of the sons of God; they are all Ishmaelites, and under the covenant that gendereth unto bondage.

Middletown, N. Y.,
March 1, 1862.

HEBREWS 12.22-24

“But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

The inspired apostle Paul, who is presumed to have written this epistle, after having discussed very fully the nature and import of the Levitical priesthood, and all its typical bearings, in prefiguring the great High Priest of our profession, and his royal priesthood, having not only compared, but also contrasted the former with the latter, most faithfully admonishes the saints to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, and to render strict obedience to him, and see that we refuse not him that speaketh. “For,” says he, “if they escape not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” He exhorts them to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset them, and run the race set before them, looking not now to Moses, who, as a servant, was faithful, but unto Christ, the Son of God, who is over his own house, and to lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and to make straight paths for their feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.” These solemn admonitions are enforced by the consideration of their high and holy calling and the superior dignity of Christ as a Son above that of Moses as a servant. If under Moses, in his inferior capacity, every transgression received a just recompense of reward, and if “he that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God,” or refused him that speaketh from heaven? All who transgressed or failed to obey the law administered by Moses were subjected to the pains and penalties of that law, and died without mercy, for there was no mercy in that law. Moses could not judge them by the law of Christ, which is written in the hearts of the children of God under the gospel, but by that law which was written on tables of stone; that law could show no mercy, hence they died without mercy; but in the law written in the heart, God is merciful to the transgressions of his people, and will remember them no more. Still the punishment of which the saints are thought worthy, who transgress the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, is much sorer than that under Moses, inasmuch as Moses could only inflict temporal judgments, and under the law of Christ spiritual judgments, such as leanness, barrenness, and fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall destroy, not the saints, but the adversaries. He visits their iniquities with the rod, and their sins with many stripes, nevertheless his loving-kindness he will not take utterly away.

As an incentive to greater diligence and more profound attention, to deeper reverence and more implicit obedience to the law of Jesus, the apostle says, “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more,” “But,” says he, “ye are come unto mount Zion.” How striking is the contrast! Mount Sinai, in Arabia, typified by the bondmaid, answering to that Jerusalem which

gendereth to bondage, and which is in bondage with her children. Where the voice of God was heard in thunder tones, proclaiming the precepts of the covenant of works, the ministration of death, the display of the awful terror of the Lord, demonstrating the impossibility of approaching unto God by the deeds of the law.

“Not to the terrors of the Lord,
The tempest, fire and smoke;
Not to the thunder of that word
Which God on Sinai spoke.”

In that mountain no refuge could be found for either man or beast, but all who approached were stoned, or thrust through with a dart. But Christ, our High Priest, has redeemed us from the terror of that law.

“And we are come to Sion’s hill,
The city of our God,
Where milder words declare his will,
And spread his love abroad.”

Mount Zion, or Sion, as it is rendered in the New Testament, was literally the city of David, the seat and centre of the government of the commonwealth of Israel, fortified with invincible walls and mighty towers, abounding with every possible comfort and security for its inhabitants and located upon the mountains of Zion, which were refreshed with the dews of Hermon, where the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore. This city is frequently used, both in the Old and New Testament, to represent the church of God in her gospel organization, strength and beauty. “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.” “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.” “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.” The gospel church is Mount Sion, and she is the city of the living God. Ezekiel and John saw this holy city of our Cod in their vision. John says, And he shewed me “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” This holy city is the church, the bride, the Lamb’s wife. To the church of the living God, thus presented as Mount Sion, and as the city of the living God, every regenerated follower of Christ, under the gospel has come. This Mount Sion, this city of the living God, is the heavenly Jerusalem. Not that Jerusalem which gendereth to bondage, which was destroyed, but the heavenly Jerusalem, which is above, is free, and which is the mother of all who, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise, and children of the free woman. The city to which the saints are now come is the city of the living God. He is so called, not only because he is alive, and lives of himself, being self-existent and independent, but because he is the source and fountain of all spirituality and vitality to all his saints. It is his city because he is the founder of it, and her name is, “The Lord is there.” He is the maker and builder of it, it is not made with hands. It is his because he has formed it, for he says, “This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. And again, he says, ”And they shall call them, Thy holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.“ The saints have come also to an innumerable company of angels. The term ”angels,“ in this place, we think means the saints in their spiritual existence. Their flesh and blood cannot come into this spiritual communion, for it cannot inherit the kingdom; no man is here known after the flesh; the flesh profiteth nothing; they have no confidence in it, for it lusts against the angel, or spirit, and all its works are in direct opposition to the fruits of the Spirit. Christ says of his little ones (and all his children are little ones), that their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven. Their fleshly powers cannot behold the face of God, but their angel, or spirit, that which is born of the Spirit, does behold the face of God, for he that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father

also, not by natural sight, but by that spiritual discernment which is peculiar to the new man. The number of these angels is definite, but no man can number them, hence to us who come to Zion the company of them is innumerable, for it includes the whole family in heaven and in earth. They constitute one general assembly, embracing all that were chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, all who are and were predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, all for whom Jesus died, for whom he arose, and for whom he ever liveth to intercede. This general assembly is the church of the firstborn, which is written or enrolled in heaven. Christ, in his mediatorial headship of his church, in all things must have the pre-eminence. He is the first begotten from the dead, and he is called the firstborn of every creature, and that he should be the firstborn among many brethren. This Mount Zion, this city of the living God, this heavenly Jerusalem, this innumerable company of angels, this general assembly, then, is no more nor less than the church of Jesus Christ, his body and his members, his flesh and his bones, and one with him, even as he is one with the Father. They have come also to God, the judge of all.

We have already noticed in the foregoing remarks that God is in the midst of Zion, that she cannot be moved. He has chosen her for his dwelling-place, and in her will he dwell forever, for he has desired it. The God of Zion is the judge of all; his judgment has decided and fixed the destiny of all beings, of all events and of all worlds. Judgment and justice are the habitation of his throne, and from his decision no appeal can be made. But there is a special sense in which all the subjects of his spiritual kingdom who have come to Zion have come to him as their judge. When called and quickened with spiritual life, each subject of his saving power finds himself arrested and arraigned before his judgment-bar, and his sins are set in order before him. The book of the divine law is brought before his court, and all the transgressions of its precepts are plainly pointed out, and all other judgments as to our case are effectually set aside. We are made conscious that whatever has been our own judgment in regard to our standing, our guilt or innocence, our merits or demerits, our ability or inability, or whatever judgments may have been decided for or against us by our fellow-men, are found to be null and void. We come to God as the judge of all; the case is between the individual and God the judge. Before our arrest we had judged of our own case favorably, for we knew not the deep depravity of our own hearts, and we even have thought justice was on our side, but now that we stand before the eternal Judge, we find that we are guilty and ruined, helpless and despairing. Now we change our judgment, and decide that justice is truly against us, and that we cannot be saved without infringement of the justice of God. But neither our first or second judgment can stand, for God is judge himself, and when he by his Spirit has made known his decision in our case, we know that it cannot be reversed. He shows us truly how guilty we are, and how justly we deserve his wrath, but he also shows us that he can be just, and the justifier of the ungodly. Christ is to us revealed as our Savior, our Wisdom, our Righteousness, our Sanctification and Redemption, and we can rely with joy and confidence on this decision, for it, being the decision of God the judge of all, is irrevocable. We come to God, the judge of all, in regard to all things that concern us for time and for eternity. As our judge he establishes our goings, the paths in which we are to tread, leading us in a way that we knew not, and in paths which we had not known. As our judge we learn (slowly perhaps) to commit to him the keeping of our souls, to decide for us what is best, and to withhold from us what he sees would not be for our good or his glory. Our feelings and our judgment we lay aside, and search the volume which contains a record of his decision, with a desire that we may walk in all his judgments and obey all his precepts. If we transgress his law (as we are conscious we do daily) we still have to do with him as our judge, for the Lord will judge his people. If our enemies set upon us to destroy us, we are not to avenge ourselves, for God is the judge of all; vengeance belongs to him, he will repay. If we meet with offenses, or are grieved with the course of our brethren, or have

wounded them, we are not competent to judge the case, but he is the judge still. We are to watch closely the judgments which he has recorded in every case, and conform to them. When Israel had no king or judge, we are told that every man did that which was good in his own eyes. But such is not our right now, as citizens of Sion. May all of us who have entered the gates of the holy city, and eaten of the tree of life, ever come boldly, freely, unreservedly to him as the Judge of all, and submit all our concerns to him.

“And to the spirits of just men made perfect.” By just men, we understand those who are freely justified through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, for no other men are just in the sight of God, the judge of all. Their spirits we understand to be what we have treated on as their angels; their spiritual life and immortality; that which is born of the Spirit; and in this there is a unity. There is one body and one spirit, even as they are all called in one hope of their calling. But while here in the flesh, even the spirit of the child of God is not perfected. It has not attained to the consummation of its perfection, or the fullness of its glory. Not yet so happy, so free from oppression, conflict and trials as it shall hereafter be. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [who is our life] shall appear, we shall be like him,” and that will be perfection truly. Here we see but in part, we know but in part, but when that which is but in part shall be done away, we shall see as we are seen, and know even as we are known. The spirits of the saints who have finished their course on earth are now perfected. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the spirits of the prophets and apostles, are perfected, but they have not left Sion, for the Mount Sion to which we are come abideth forever. This kingdom shall break in pieces all other kingdoms, and it shall stand forever; it is an everlasting kingdom, and a dominion that hath no end, and all who are brought from the east and from the west, the north and the south, shall sit down in the kingdom with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. The mortality of our earthly bodies cannot interrupt the communion of the spirits of the just.

“The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make;
All join in Christ, their living Head,
And of his grace partake.”

“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” We have not come to Moses, the servant, but to Jesus, the Son, to Jesus the Savior, the mediator of the new covenant, the mediator between God and men. The new covenant is contrasted with the old covenant, which was a ministration of death, but the new is a covenant of life and peace. “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should not place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old.” (Heb. 8:7-13) As Aaron and his sons in their priestly office ministered as mediators at the altars, under the old covenant, with the blood of calves and other victims, which were offered continually in mediation for Israel, so Jesus, the High Priest of our profession, is the Mediator of the New Testament, or covenant. In the new covenant the spiritual Hebrew, or Israelite, draws near unto God by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us

through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. It is therefore through Jesus Christ as our Mediator that we enter into the holiest of all, that we come unto God by him, and from the least to the greatest all know God, which knowledge is eternal life. “Now,” says the apostle, “of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb. 8:1,2) The apostle in thus summing up, compares and contrasts the two covenants, and the mediators of them, respectively, and shows in verse six that Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry than that of Aaron, under the first testament, and that “by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” The old covenant was established on conditional terms; Life and temporal blessings were promised if they obeyed its provisions, but death and temporal judgments if they transgressed; but the new covenant is a better covenant, and established upon better promises, unconditional promises, promises which are confirmed by two immutable things, by the oath of him who can swear by no greater, by the immutability of his counsel. “And for this cause he [Jesus] is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” (Heb. 9:15) “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Not yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with the blood of others But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” “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.”

“And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” The blood of sprinkling to which the new covenant saints are come, is the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for the remission of their sins, and the sprinkling of that blood signifies its application to those for whom it was shed. As Peter applies it, to the “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” Answering to the application of the blood of the passover lamb, in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, which blood was applied to the door-posts of the dwellings of those who were to eat the passover, and were saved from the angel of wrath, and redeemed from the house of bondage. “Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” (Heb. 9:18-23) The purification of the children of the new covenant is effected by the sprinkling of his blood, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, and who has obtained eternal redemption for them. His blood speaketh better things than did the blood of Abel. The voice of Abel’s blood called from the ground for retribution upon Cain, but the voice of Jesus’ blood speaks peace, deliverance, salvation. “Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” (Col. 1:20) The language of Jesus’ blood sprinkled upon his redeemed people is that of peace, it bids the messenger of divine wrath pass over those on whom it is sprinkled; no wrath can enter there, no condemnation, no guilt can there be found, for his blood cleanseth them from all guilt. It speaks in soothing accents to the

despairing sinner, and bids him lift up his head and rejoice in Christ his Savior; it speaks deliverance to the captives, of opening the prison to them that are bound. His blood proclaims a complete and full salvation to all for whom it is shed, and of an inheritance of immortal glory beyond the grave.

We have briefly noticed the most prominent points embraced in the text; on each there is room for much enlargement, but the very manifest design of the apostle was, by all these considerations, to urge and admonish the saints to see that they refuse not him that speaketh. Higher, nobler, loftier considerations than any presented in the law of a carnal commandment, or enforced by the merciless rod of Moses, appeal to the hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset them, and to run with patience the race which is set before them, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith.

Middletown, N. Y.
March 15, 1862.

JEREMIAH 50,51; REVELATION 17

(Reply to Sister Leonard)

We presume it is not expected that we should examine and compare all that is contained in these very lengthy chapters of Jeremiah, with what is contained in the portion of Revelation referred to, but simply and briefly reply to the inquiry in regard to their connection. What was prophesied by Jeremiah was in reference to ancient Babylon literally, and his fearful predictions were fulfilled to the letter in the destruction of that magnificent city, the slaying of her king and his nobles by the Medes and Persians, and the utter overthrow of the imperial government.

The destruction of Mystery, Babylon, recorded in Revelation 17. is a presentation, in highly figurative language, of the wrath and vengeance of God, which is held in store, and soon to be poured out upon antichrist.

Ancient Babylon, in her rise, progress, wickedness and final overthrow, was unquestionably designed as a type of the organized powers of the man of sin, the son of perdition, that should be arrayed against the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the gospel dispensation. Hence the name Babylon is applied in Revelation to what is elsewhere in the New Testament called "That Wicked," "whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." (II Thess. 2:8-10) The very name Babylon signifies confusion, and is probably derived from the circumstance of God's confusing the language of those enterprising, industrious, hard-working parties who had united their efforts to build a tower whose top should reach to heaven. In this grand enterprise three prominent objects were intended to be secured: First, to open a common thoroughfare from earth to heaven, without the humiliating necessity of being saved by grace. Second, to defeat the wisdom of God, should he again attempt to deluge the earth; and last, but not least, to erect a lasting monument of the capability, enterprise and zeal of men. But in a way quite unbooked for by them, God confounded their language and defeated their stupendous project. The tower lacked just about as much of reaching to heaven as all the

inventions and works of men are doomed to fall short of saving sinners independently of the grace of God. It has always been the pride of antichrist in all her forms and organizations to boast of her own exploits, of what she has done, means to do, and of her free agency in opening avenues to heaven. Thus the king of Babylon exulted in the palace, of his kingdom: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" But, "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee." (Daniel 4:30,31) In the vain and wicked imaginations of his heart he had said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13,14) But the Lord of hosts has said he would rise up against Babylon, and sweep it with the besom of destruction.

In all these particulars it is easy to trace the spirit, the pride, the vain and lofty imaginations of antichrist in every age. From this ancient and widely renowned city, with its broad and towering walls, its gates of brass and mighty fortifications, in its oppression of Israelitish captives, its invasion of Jerusalem, its desecration of consecrated vessels of the Lord, its widespread dominion and its provinces, all prefigured "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." (Rev. 17:18) But in the parallels presented by Jeremiah and John, in the chapters before us, the destruction of the typical and the antitypical Babylons, are more particularly described, and show the retributive vengeance of God in their awful doom. And as at the time of the destruction of the former, God called his captives out of the former Babylon, so, in connection with the final destruction of Mystery, Babylon, John heard a voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." From which we infer that there are some of the Lord's captive children now in Babylon and she is speedily to be destroyed; God now commands them to come out of her.

Middletown, N. Y.,
March 15, 1862.

MATTHEW 2:2; LUKE 1:31-33; JOHN 1:49

Brother Beebe: – Although I do not wish to be troublesome, still I have a desire to have your views on the following Scriptures: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2) In Luke 1:31-33, it is said: "And shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Again, John 1:49, "Nathaniel answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." Now my particular inquiry is, In what sense is he the King of the Jews, setting up the throne of David, and reigning over the house of Jacob, as the King of Israel?

Your unworthy brother,

J. E. Settle.

New Hope, KY., March 14, 1862.

REPLY

The passages presented, especially Luke 1:3 1, identifies our Lord Jesus Christ as the illustrious personage of whom the other passages testify, and of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, and of whom God had spoken by the prophet Micah, verse 2, saying, “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.”

The Jews, the house of Jacob and Israel, all mean the same thing. Literally these names were applied to the twelve patriarchs and their descendants according to the flesh, as the house or family of Jacob, which was also called by his name Israel, including the whole commonwealth, as redeemed from the house of bondage, and brought out of Egypt by the high hand and outstretched arm of God, led through the wilderness, and into the promised land, where subsequently God raised up David and gave him to be a king over them. This same people were called Jews, which name they derived from Judah, the patriarch of that tribe to which David their king belonged, and after the division of the house of Jacob, by the secession of ten tribes, which were afterwards called Israel, the two tribes which still adhered to the government of the house, or descendants of David, were called Jews, in distinction from the revolted tribes which had organized a separate and distinct government.

Israel under the old dispensation was the type of the church and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, in its gospel organization. But in the gospel church, ‘lie is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is there circumcision, which is outward in the flesh.’ (Rem. 2:28) All that constituted a man a Jew, nationally, was outward. If born in Abraham’s house, or bought with his money, and circumcised with the circumcision made with hands, as an outward rite, in the flesh, such an one was a Jew outwardly, but no fleshly birth, or outward rites, can constitute a person an anti-typical Jew, or one inwardly, as the church of Christ is a kingdom which is not of this world, and in which no man is known after the flesh. For “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Those, therefore, who are born again are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; and, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever;” they are made manifest as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. These are the seed that shall serve him, and be accounted to our Lord Jesus Christ for a generation, and these alone constitute the true, spiritual, or anti-typical Israel of our God. “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:29) When John the Baptist saw many of the Jews, who were only Jews outwardly, who had not been born of the Spirit, and therefore could not show fruits meet for repentance, come to his baptism, he gave them to understand that although they were undoubtedly Jews outwardly, they could not be received into communion with those who were Jews inwardly, as subjects of the spiritual kingdom, on any such claims. He said unto them, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” (Matt. 3:7-9) “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Rom. 2:29)

Having briefly shown the distinction between the outward Jews, who are Jews outwardly in the flesh, and those who are Jews inwardly and spiritually, we proceed to show that Christ was born King of the Jews, according to the latter classification. Thus one of the Gentile churches, in Asia, is recognized as

Jews in this inward and spiritual sense, while those who were of the synagogue of Satan, who said they were Jews, but were not, (that is, in this inward and spiritual sense) but did lie, were disowned and denounced as deceivers, intruders and liars. (Rev. 3:9) Paul very clearly elucidates in what sense Christ is King of the Jews, and in what sense the subjects of Christ's government are Jews, in his arguments to the Galatians. Hear him, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," etc. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth. or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. 3:13-16) Also verses 6-9: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." As David, therefore, was king over the carnal Israelites, so Jesus Christ, who is the anti-type of David, is King of all the Israel of God, who are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile, for he has washed them from all pollution in his own atoning blood, and clothed them with the garments of his salvation, and covered them with the robe of his righteousness. David was in many respects the most eminent type of Christ, especially of him in his kingly office, and as the Son of David, in lineal descent, he bears his name, and from his loins, according to the flesh, was raised up to sit upon his throne. Isaiah recorded his advent in prophecy, as a child born, a Son given, "The government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever." (Isa. 9:6,7) The sublime language used in Psalms 89, can only be understood in its application to Christ, although the name of David as the type is used: "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations." Again, "Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidest, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him; and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him forevermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven." "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me." On the day of Pentecost, Peter, in preaching to the people, spake freely of the patriarch David, and proved conclusively that the declarations made to David were prophetic, and were not fulfilled in David as a man, personally, nor in his natural posterity, but that they were spoken of and fulfilled in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." According, therefore, to all the prophecies going before, God has set his King upon his holy hill Zion,

and has said unto him, Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. And unto his Son he saith, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Heb. 1:8,9)

We have briefly considered the spiritual kingdom and government of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the King of the Jews, showing that his subjects are Jews spiritually, and of the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, discarding the flesh, and having no confidence in it. We have also pointed out some reasons why the throne of the spiritual kingdom is called the throne of David, namely: Because it was typified by the throne of David, and the Mediatorial throne of the Son of God is to the spiritual Israel the only legitimate place and center of power to the church of God, as the throne of David in the type, was the center of all legislative, judicial and administrative power for the government of the carnal Israelites. As no other department of the commonwealth of Israel had any right to resist, supersede, amend or alter any of the orders of the throne of David, so the power of the Wonderful, Counselor, who sits upon the throne of David in this spiritual or gospel sense, alone has power to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth, even forever.

We have also shown that as God had promised and sworn with an oath to David, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne, so in the resurrection of Christ, his inauguration, coronation as King of Zion, setting as Priest upon his throne, to rule and bear the glory, we have the verification of the promise and oath. Thus showing in what sense he is King of the Jews, who the Jews are, over whom he reigns; how he sits upon the throne of David, and how his sceptre is swayed over the house of Jacob, and his reign of righteousness as the King of Israel.

We may have failed to comprehend the design of our brother’s inquiries, and consequently to satisfy his mind, but what we have written we will submit to his consideration, and to the consideration of all our readers, praying that what we have written as our views may be carefully and prayerfully tested by the standard of truth, and only indorsed or accredited so far as they shall be found sustained by the holy Scriptures.

Middletown, N. Y.,
April 1, 1862.

PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC

Mt. Ida, Kentucky

Brother Beebe: – Brother Charles E. Stewart desires your views on the origin and extent of the priesthood of Melchisedec.

James Terry.

REPLY

Wise and learned men have failed to satisfy the curious upon this subject. Their researches have been laborious, and their conclusions various and conflicting. Perhaps the most popular idea has been that Melchisedec the priest, who met Abraham and blessed him, and Shem, the son of Noah, are one and the same person; as Shem lived nearly three hundred years after the birth of Abram, and is said to have been called “King of Justice,” and supposed to have officiated as a priest. Living at Salem, near where Abraham offered up Isaac, and in Abraham’s day, the conclusion is somewhat plausible that it was him that met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. All this, however, we only give as the speculations of men on the subject. All we can know, and all we need to know, is just what God has been pleased to reveal in the scriptures. And all that the scriptures contain in regard to Melchisedec is in regard to his priesthood, as independent of and anterior to the priesthood of Aaron and his sons. Just enough of Melchisedec is given in the scriptures to make the figure perfect. As a man his descent is not given, as it was not required to perfect the type. If his lineage is given, in the person of Shem, or any other individual, it is not as a priest, but as a man. If Shem was the Melchisedec mentioned in the scriptures, as the son of Noah, his descent is counted; but, even if that be so, his priesthood was not in that descent, and as a priest he was still without father, without mother, without descent; having neither beginning of days or end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. That is, as a priest, the type was made like or to agree with its legitimate anti-type, the Son of God. The only difficulty in understanding this record of Melchisedec seems to arise from confounding his priesthood with his person as a man. No man since Adam has lived on the earth without descent, or without father and mother, as men. But Melchisedec, as a priest, stands before us in the scriptures without descent; the representative of a priesthood of a peculiar order; expressly given to typify the order of the priesthood of the Son of God, as being not only independent of and superior to that of the sons of Levi, but of an unchangeable character, without derivation or descent, without beginning of days nor end of life, abiding forever.

In Hebrews 7, this figure is brought forward from the Old Testament types, and all that is found in the Old Testament is faithfully transcribed as constituting the figure, in all its fullness. All that is here copied is necessary to make the figure complete; anything more would be redundant, and worse than useless, for the purpose, as it would mar the accuracy of the figure. Had Moses given us the biography of Melchisedec, his lenial descent, as a man, the history of his natural life and the time and place of his death, as a man, where could these particulars be used in illustration of the priesthood of the Son of God? Had they been required they would have been furnished; but they were not necessary, and therefore we are told that his “descent was not counted.” (Heb. 7:6) That is, his descent as a man, for as a priest he had none; but as he is called “Priest of the Most High God,” we clearly infer that his priesthood was by special appointment of God, and not by lineal descent from any previously existing order of priesthood; neither had he any successors, but an independent and unbroken priesthood, having neither predecessors or successors. The whole of the seventh chapter to the Hebrews is devoted to an explanation of this subject, showing that the priesthood of the Son of God was after the order, or according to the order of Melchisedec, and not after that of Aaron.

Indeed, the whole epistle to the Hebrews is devoted to the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. And to show that it was not a continuation of the Levitical priesthood, the inspired writer assures us that it was not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchisedec. The origin of Melchisedec’s priesthood, therefore, was immediately from God himself, as this order is the result of the word and oath of God himself. “The Lord sware and will not repent. Thou

art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec.” And the extent of the priesthood of Melchisedec, like all other types, was carried to and merged in the priesthood of the Son of God.

We have now given our views as far as they were called for by brother Stewart. But, if the Lord permits, we will hereafter attempt to show how and wherein the priesthood of the Son of God is after the order of Melchisedec, which we conceive to be far more important and interesting than the origin and extent of the type.

Middletown, N. Y.,
April 1, 1862.

PSALM 110:4

“The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

The inspired writer to the Hebrews calls attention to the important fact that all the priests of the Levitical order were made priests without an oath; but the priesthood of the Son of God being an infinitely higher order, the superior dignity and everlasting perpetuity of his office is expressed in the awful solemnity of his induction: “But this with an oath by him that said unto him, ..Thou art a priest for ever,” etc., and the apostle adds, “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.” Regarding then the oath of God in establishing the permanent and everlasting priesthood of the Lord Jesus, as designed to mark the wide disparity between him and Aaron, his suretyship from that of the sons of Levi, and the superiority of the testament or covenant, of which he is the surety, above that which was made with the patriarchs, the subject is peculiarly interesting to all the saints who are vitally interested in that suretyship. The psalmist, inspired with the spirit of prophecy, says, “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent.” We can conceive of nothing in all the record of divine revelation so solemn, so sacred, or so full of consolation to the heirs of immortality, as the oath of God. God, who cannot lie, who is immutable, of one mind, and cannot be turned; God, whose word without an oath cannot be doubted without involving the most impious infidelity and blasphemy, has seen cause to swear, on this subject, in confirmation of his word. We can conceive of no reason why he should swear in confirmation of his truth, except that which is given us in Hebrews 6:18, namely, Being willing to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, etc. “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 upon the hope set before us.” How condescending and how gracious to pledge his holiness for the consolation of his children, and how truly consoling it is to know that the new testament or covenant is better than the Sinai covenant, which could make nothing perfect, which could not give life, which could not make the comers thereunto perfect, could not purge their conscience from dead works, nor qualify them to serve the true God. A better covenant, established on better promises, and secured by a better, and infallible Surety. The former testament or covenant was in the flesh of Israel, and all its promises were conditional, and all the conditions were based on their obedience to its requisitions. The Levitical priesthood, with its teeming altars, its rivers of blood, its numerous victims and oft repeated ceremonies, could secure no permanent or spiritual blessing to the priest or to the people. Neither Aaron nor any of his sons could continue long in the office, by reason of death; and

even during the brief period of their official service they had first to offer sacrifices for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people, showing that they were themselves sinners needing to be purged, redeemed and saved by better blood than ever had streamed from their smoking altars. But the great High Priest of our profession is holy, harmless, separate from sinners and higher than the heavens, having no personal sin to expiate, no blemish to unfit him for his sacred position.

“Not Aaron nor Melchisedec
Could claim such high descent as he;
His nature and his names bespeak
His unexampled pedigree.

Descended from the eternal God,
He bears the name of his own Son,
And dressed in human flesh and blood,
He puts his priestly garments on.”

It pleased the father that in him all fullness should dwell. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. The whole fullness of the church is in him, for the church is his body, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all. He is full of grace and truth; he is full of righteousness and of all the eternal perfections of Deity; full of life and immortality, possessing the power of an endless life; full of ability to save unto the uttermost all that come unto the Father by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them; strong to redeem and mighty to save, having power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him; possessing all the power of earth and heaven. How admirably qualified to be the Surety of the new covenant! We have observed that the old covenant of works was conditional, and depended on the obedience of those to whom it was given, but there was no reliable surety, all were bankrupt, and all accursed, for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified in the sight of God; but the new or better covenant, with its better promises, relies not on the fidelity and personal obedience of the people for its fulfillment, but upon the Surety, upon the High Priest of our profession. Hence in the revelation of this covenant not a condition is found. It is ordered in all things and sure, and it is all our hope and all our salvation. Its emphatic language is the promises of God, all of which are confirmed by his oath, saying, “I will,” and “Thou shalt.”

“The Lord hath sworn.” This would seem to be enough; what more can we desire in confirmation of the pledge? But to the assurance: we are told he will not repent. It is not the word, the promise, the oath of a fickle or mutable being who is of one mind today and may be of another mind tomorrow; no change of time or circumstances can alter the purpose and counsel of his will; he is of one mind, and none can turn him. He is the same yesterday, today and forever; he changes not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed. The immutability of God is a heart-cheering consideration to the saints, especially in its application to the priesthood of our divine Redeemer. God has not only sworn, “Thou art a priest,” but the words of his sacred oath are, “Thou art a priest for ever.” Never to be changed, dismissed or superseded in the holy office. The sons of Levi were not suffered to continue, by reason of death, but Christ, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. They were made priests by the law of a carnal commandment, but Christ is made a priest by the power of an endless life. 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. Thus the power of eternal life, or immortality, is secured in the priesthood of the Son of God, and his priesthood cannot be changed, because he hath an unchangeable priesthood. Furthermore, the oath of the Lord determines irrevocably the order as well as the perpetuity of this

priesthood. The Lord has sworn and will not repent, that it is and shall forever be after the order of Melchisedec, and consequently not after the order of Aaron.

Let us consider this order as applicable to the priesthood of Christ.

First. The priesthood of Christ is a royal priesthood. Under the Levitical economy the priesthood was distinct from the reigning power, there was nothing regal or royal in it, but “Behold the man whose name is The Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: 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.” (Zech. 6:12,13) Our Priest is seated on the throne of power, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. This is after the order of Melchisedec. “For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God.” These titles for our benefit are thus explained: “First being by interpretation, King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.” (Heb. 7:1.2) As the King of righteousness, his government is founded in righteousness, and every perfection of eternal Deity is displayed in all the orders of his throne. While as King of righteousness he demands a perfect conformity to all his laws and institutions, and that all the subjects of his kingdom shall be holy as God is holy, as King of peace, in his priesthood he is able to make them so. By one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified; for all his subjects were sanctified, or set apart, by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus and called. He has himself made peace by the blood of his cross, having reconciled his people unto God. As King of righteousness, he met the stern demands of the law and justice of God, bore all the penalty due to their transgression, put away their sin by the sacrifice of himself, washed them from all pollution in his own blood, and having freely justified them through the redemption that is in him as their Priest, he calls and quickens them by giving them eternal life, imparts to them his own spirit, writes his law in their hearts and sits upon his throne and rules them by the word of his power. Thus the counsel of peace is between them both, that is, between the Ruler and the Priest, the King of righteousness and the King of peace. His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The Everlasting Father, The Mighty God, The Prince of Peace. Truly the government is upon his shoulder, and “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever.” (Isa. 9:6,7) Well did the apostle say, “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, [of the order of Aaron] to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.” (Heb. 7:26-28) “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb. 8:1,2) After having thus briefly summed up the amount of the testimony of the order of the priesthood of the Messiah, and its superiority over the typical priesthood, having shown its royalty, its power, its righteousness, its majesty and efficiency, he exhorts the saints from all these considerations to appreciate their exalted privileges; “And having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” And as we would honor

Christ in his priestly office, let us be careful that we discard all other priests and offerings to commend us to God, knowing as we do that there is salvation in no other, that there is no other name under heaven given whereby we must be saved.

“To this dear Surety’s hand
Will I commit my cause;
He answers and fulfills
His Father’s broken laws;
Behold my soul at freedom set!
My Surety paid the dreadful debt.

Jesus, my great High Priest,
Offered his blood and died;
My guilty conscience seeks
No sacrifice beside;
His powerful blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
April 15, 1862.

I JOHN 2:2

Elder Beebe: – Please give your views on I John 2:2. “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

Joseph Bennett

REPLY

We have several times given our views on this text, but probably brother Bennett has failed to receive the numbers of our paper containing our remarks. The word *propitiation* signifies that which reconciles – by removing wrath, and makes propitiations – and is therefore equivalent to the word *atonement*. Christ is the propitiatory sacrifice which was made for the sins of his people, both Jews and Gentiles. He has satisfied the law’s demands, and met and bore in his own person all its penalties due to the transgressions of his members, and thereby reconciled them to God. He is therefore the propitiation for those primitive saints called from among the Jews; and not only for them, but for the Gentiles also. For he is the only propitiation in all the world, either for Jews or Gentiles, as he is the only Saviour, Redeemer, and Advocate with the Father. It does not mean that he has redeemed and saved all mankind – atoned and rendered propitious – or made atonement and reconciliation for all the people in the world, but for all of God’s people in the world: for John also declares, “And we know that we (who are reconciled unto God by his propitiatory offering) are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

The force of the declaration of the text is that in all the world there is none other who can reconcile sinners unto God, deliver them from going down to the pit. That “There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
May 1, 1862.

I CORINTHIANS 15:24-28

(Reply to Sister Brown)

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

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

Hence Christ, by his spirit which inspired the prophets, said of his people, “I will ransom them from death: O death, I will be thy plague, O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.” (Hos. 13:14) Again it is testified of him by the same spirit, “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces;” etc. (Isa. 25:8) And this Mediatorial triumph of the Son of God cannot be fully consummated while death holds dominion over the bodies of those whom he has ransomed from the power of the grave. And as his Mediatorial reign by the irrevocable decree of God, even the Father, is immutably extended, ‘Till he hath put all things under him;’ so the final resurrection of all the saints is most conclusively demonstrated, and a denial of the resurrection of the bodies of the saints is regarded by the apostle as equivalent to a denial of the Mediatorial conquest and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has already ransomed them from the power of the grave, having paid the ransom price, and he holds that power in his own hands, as he said to John, “Fear not: I am the First and Last: I am he that liveth, and was dead: and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.” (Rev. 1:17,18) Having the keys of death and the grave he has the power to open, and none can shut; to shut, and none can open. Thus the apostle has

shown that the resurrection of the saints at the last day is indispensable to the complete triumph of the Son of God, and that his triumph shall be consummated and his Mediatorial work finished when death, which is the last enemy, shall be subdued by the resurrection of the bodies of his saints. “For whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” He is the firstborn from the dead, the first fruits of them that slept; and God “hath begotten us [the saints] again, to a lively [or a vital] hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,” etc. (I Peter 1:3,4) “But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom. 8:11)

“Then cometh the end.” The end of what? The end which Jehovah declared from the beginning, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” (Isa. 66:10) The full and complete accomplishment of the Mediatorial work of our Redeemer cometh to an end; the design of God; for the word is used in scripture to signify God’s purpose or design. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord.” (James 5:11) The end also of all the trials, tribulations and tears of the saints. The end of their sighing, sorrowing, and sinning; the end of all their association with corruption, depravity and earth. But above all, in the immediate sense of this subject, the finishing stroke of his Mediatorial work which was given him to do. He has himself declared, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” “No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:37,44) Then the resurrection of that the Father gave him – that the Father hath drawn to him – shall be the consummation of his Mediatorial work.

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

“When he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.” As Daniel described this kingdom, which the God of heaven has set up, as breaking in pieces all other kingdoms, and that it should survive them all and stand forever, so all other governments must terminate with the elements of nature, all things must be subdued to him, and even the rule of sin and reign of death, as well as all humanly organized governments must be abolished, and pass, before the kingdom shall be delivered to the Father. Even, “The last enemy shall be destroyed, which is death.” How perfect and complete will be his victory; not a single enemy left living in the field, not a single fort or piece of artillery remaining to be used against the King or his subjects; all things subdued and put under his feet! This is virtually done already. “For he hath put all things under his feet.” The word has gone from the mouth of God in righteousness, and shall not return void of that whereunto he hath sent it. All things, whether they be principalities or powers, thrones or dominions, things visible or invisible, all, all are put under him. Hell is subdued, death abolished, sin from all the saints annihilated, and Christ is triumphant over all

things, with all the trophies of his deathless victory, in full command of earth and heaven, shall ascend and bear all his redeemed sons to the mansions of his Father's house prepared for them from the foundation of the world. And with divine authority shall he command the avenues of immortal glory. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah."(Psa. 24:7-10)

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

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

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

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

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

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

As God, he is one and identical with the Father, and embodies all the fulness of eternal Godhead. As the Man of God's right hand, and as he is called the Man Christ Jesus, and the Man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; he existed in this manhood with his Father from everlasting; not in a fleshly nature, until he came in the flesh, but in the perfect and complete manhood indicated in the declarations of scripture referred to; and which we clearly infer from the divine testimony that Man was created in

his image and likeness, and that Adam is the figure of him that was to come. As the Man Christ Jesus, he embodied, and from everlasting did embody, his church, which is his body and the fulness of him that filleth all in all, according to Eph. 1:23. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." (I Cor. 12:12) "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourished and cherished it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:29,30,32) "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are all called in one hope of your calling." "And he gave some apostles," etc. "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the BODY OF CHRIST. Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:4,11,12,13) This one body, this perfect man, this full stature of the measure of Christ, refers to what we call the mystical stature, man or body, and in its full measurement presents Christ as the Head, and the church as his body, flesh and bones, and all the saints as members of this body, in this Christ, in this perfect Man, in this measured stature of the fulness of Christ, as we have seen that the church is his body, and the fulness of him that filleth all in all; that is, the church is the fulness of the stature, of the members, to set forth a perfect man.

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

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

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

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

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

“With feeble light, and half obscure,
We mortals thy arrangements view;
Not knowing that the least are sure,
And the mysterious just and true.
My favored soul shall meekly learn
To lay her reason at thy throne;
Too weak thy secrets to discern –
I'll trust thee for my guide alone.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
May 1, 1862.

ISAIAH 43:3, 4

(Reply to G. W. Cotrell)

“For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior. I gave Egypt for thy ransom; Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou wast honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee and people for thy life.”

REPLY

The particular enquiry is, What is the gift, and to whom given? The special sovereign and discriminating love of God to Israel is exemplified and demonstrated by the wonderful deliverances which God has wrought for them at sundry times and places. National Israel is the type of the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as God gave Egypt for the ransom of the Hebrews, when for their deliverance the hosts of Pharaoh perished in the Red Sea. For the temporal salvation of the Hebrews, God gave Egypt to be destroyed. In this case Egypt was the gift given by the sin-avenging God to the sword of justice and wrath. Ethiopia and Seba were the descendants of Ham, given with their descendants throughout all time, by the prophetic curse of Noah against Ham, or Canaan, to be servants of servants to the descendants of Shem and Japheth forever. Thus in the division of the families of the earth God has been specially gracious to Israel. ‘When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.’ (Deut. 32:8,9) Ethiopia and Seba were thus given to be servants to Israel; as the descendants of Shem, as well as to those of the posterity of Japheth. And in the descendants of Cush, from whom Ethiopia and Seba proceeded, are included all those nations which occupied Palestine. The Canaanites, the Hitites, Jebuzites, and all others of the descendants of Ham, were given to the sword for the sake of Israel, that Israel might go in and possess the land. Even the Gibeonites, who by stratagem obtained a treaty with Joshua that they should be permitted to remain in the land, were nevertheless given, according to the prophecy of Noah, to be servants, and employed as hewers of wood and drawers of water, for Israel. And in many subsequent wars the descendants of Ham were routed and put to flight before Israel, until ultimately driven into Africa.

We have confined our remarks in this reply to our correspondent principally to his two questions, viz: What was given? and to whom?

Many reflections are suggested on this subject.

First – If the decree of Almighty God, dooming the posterity of Canaan, has prevailed, and successfully resisted the combined powers of so many nations, in holding them where they were placed by the curse of Noah, will the fiat of our government to liberate them from that decree and to elevate them to a level with the posterities of Shem and Japheth be more successful?

Second – As God gave Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba for Israel, in the type, will he not ultimately destroy every weapon that is formed against Zion, and give to utter destruction all the powers of this world, who dare oppose the cause and people of the living God? As he gave Egypt to be destroyed in the sea, and Ethiopia and Seba were driven out to make room for the Hebrews, may we not confidently believe that, even so will he do for his peculiar people – the people whom he hath chosen for himself, and which he claims as the lot of his inheritance, and of whom he has said, “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm: for he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of mine eye.” (Psa. 105:15) This Psalm presents the full answer to the enquiries of our friend, and we request our readers to turn to it.

Third – Our subject suggests the sovereign, discriminating love of the eternal God to his chosen heritage, unto whom he says, “Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
May 1, 1862.

MATTHEW 18

Brother Beebe: – Will you please give your views on the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, particularly on the subject of church discipline? Can a member of the church be lawfully excluded, except it be done according to the rule laid down in that chapter? Some think it unnecessary to take labor in all cases, especially cases where the offence is committed in the presence of the church. Your views on the subject will be kindly received.

Yours, with esteem,
C. B. Fuller.
Roxbury, N. Y.,
January 17, 1862.

REPLY: We do not feel competent to explain all the questions which may be suggested upon the subject of church discipline, still it appears to us that the subject is very clearly laid down in the New Testament. We have observed in our fifty years membership in the church of Christ, that as a general thing the greatest discrepancy in opinion in regard to the laws of Christ have been where churches have been least inclined to be governed by the word and Spirit of our divine Lord and Master. We do not feel sure that what is said by our Lord on the subject in this chapter (Matthew 18) was designed to embrace all cases of discipline that should ever occur, but rather to cover the ground embraced in the subject on which our Lord was at that time instructing his disciples, for we find other portions of the New Testament devoted to an extended view of the same subject, and particularizing many cases in which individual christians and whole churches are required to act in obedience to the laws of Christ. Still, it seems to us that no action of a church or of a member of the church can be valid where the general instructions of this chapter are not observed and practiced.

The time and circumstances attending this instruction show that an unbecoming ambition to excel each other was betrayed by at least some of the disciples, and to settle the matter they brought the subject to Jesus, and put the question in undisguised terms to him, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” This kind of ambition lies generally at the bottom of most, if not all, the dissensions which divide churches, and individual saints, and is prolific in the production of disaffection and alienation; and as that ambitious fiend is still alive, and sometimes harbored in the breasts of christians, it will be well for us all to observe carefully the instructions given in this case. Jesus set a little child in the midst of them. What an example! What a volume of much needed instruction is here! “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And who shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso

shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Here are the primary instructions in regard to discipline. Deep humility is the very first requisite, and it is indispensable as a qualification to transact the business of Christ’s kingdom. Without this childlike spirit the gates of the kingdom are barred against us. The profession of this meek and humble spirit is a passport to the kingdom, and such an humble little child that believes in Christ cannot be rejected or excluded without rejecting and excluding Christ himself. How fearful, too, to offend one of those little ones who believe in Jesus. The term here rendered, *offend*, has a broader signification than merely to ruffle the feelings, or excite the resentment. We understand it to be in the sense that Peter was on one occasion an offense to Jesus; that is, when he savored the things which be of men, and not the things which be of God. To offend may be understood to mean to lay a stumbling block in their way; to deprive them of their sacred rights in the house of God; to grieve their childlike spirit by unbrotherly conduct, or to overturn their faith, as did Philetus and Hymeneus the faith of some. The church as a body, and every member should be solemnly impressed with the weight of these instructions, or they cannot be competent to administer the discipline of the church of the living God. Beware then, brethren, how you attempt to meddle with the discipline of the church if actuated or even influenced by a haughty spirit that would strive for the mastery. We answer, therefore, one of brother Fuller’s questions. No member of the church can be lawfully excluded from the church without a strict conformity of this rule. Where the supremacy of this rule enjoining a childlike humility on each acting member of the church is not regarded, it were better that they were drowned in the sea, than under any other rule to expel from the privileges of the church of God one of his humblest disciples. Where this rule is observed, and the church is solemnly impressed with a sense of their responsibility, they feel that to expel from communion any who should be retained in fellowship, is to reject the Lord Jesus; there will be no room for thrusting the side and shoulder, but an ardent desire to restore the erring in the spirit of meekness, and in the bowels of Christ.

This consideration is enforced on our minds by a beautiful illustration in the same connection: “How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, He rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” A brother who has given us the evidence that he has been converted and become as a little child has been accordingly received into fellowship, but subsequently he is overtaken in a fault. Shall he at once be killed? Shall he be rudely thrust out? No, “Ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” (Gal. 6:1,2) Go in the spirit of humility into the mountain and search diligently for the strayed sheep, remember that it is the will of your heavenly Father that he shall not perish. You cannot fulfill the law of Christ if you do not desire his restoration to the fold, and after all your toil and labor in searching the mountain, if you succeed in reclaiming the wanderer, if you possess the Spirit of Christ, it will afford you more joy to see him reclaimed and brought back to his privileges in the church, than to see all the other members, which have not strayed, in their place in the church. It is not the will of God our Father which is in heaven that he shall perish, and should it be your will to consign him to perish in the wilderness? “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.” Christ would not charge us to take heed if there were no liability of our doing so. Do not under rate them, they are precious in the eyes of him who came from heaven to save that which was lost; and in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. Yet, notwithstanding the full force

of all this admonition, there are cases in which exclusions are unavoidable. Woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh! "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee." "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee." We are the mystical body of Christ, and members one of another. No sane man would consent to the amputation of a healthy and sound member of his body, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ does the church. Should a hand, or foot, or any other member become diseased, bruised or painful, all the sound members would sympathize with the diseased member, and before we could consent to amputation we would exhaust all the healing medicines within our reach; but if mortification sets in, and the inflammation is actually spreading to the centre of vitality, to the heart, as a last painful and dreaded resort we apply the surgical knife. So in the church, if the hand or foot, or even the eye, however useful these members may have been, or may be deemed, as indispensable for usefulness or convenience, if the law of Christ requires us to cut them off and cast them from the body, it must be done, for it is better to enter into life halt, maimed, or with but one eye, than, retaining all these disordered and incurable members, to be cast into hell fire. That is, into confusion, in the sense in which James speaks of the tongue as an unruly member, setting on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell. The discipline of the church of God must be enforced strictly according to the law of Christ, without partiality; but it must be done as well in the Spirit of Christ as in strict obedience to the letter of his precepts, for his word and his Spirit always harmonize and go together. The most essential point is to be guided by his Spirit, for that Spirit will lead us into the truth. Whenever we are led by the humble, loving, tender, forgiving Spirit of Christ, and the law of Christ and health of the church demand that we should pluck out right eyes, or cut off right hands, there will be deep lamentation and mourning, certainly not exulting, and boasting, that we have carried our points. Who ever exulted that he had lost an eye, or suffered the amputation of a hand or a foot? When we see brethren or churches exulting that they have carried their points, and procured the expulsion of any of their members, we feel confident that the law of Christ has been violated.

Brother Fuller asks our views on this chapter, and we have endeavored to state as plainly as possible what are our views on the first fourteen verses, for we do not believe any brother or any church can possibly obey the remaining part of the instructions unless they are governed by the instructions thus far considered.

We now come to the portion of the chapter to which we suppose Elder Fuller more particularly refers, in which our Lord says, "Moreover," that is, what he is now about to say is added to what he has said, and is to be taken in the same connection; these instructions are not to be separated, divided, garbled, nor handled deceitfully: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee." Let us observe as we read, he is thy brother who has trespassed, he is still to be recognized in that relation until the whole course of discipline has been faithfully pursued; under no circumstances then is the laboring brother or the church at liberty to apply to him offensive epithets, such as heretic, drunkard, liar, thief, fox, crafty, disorderly, etc., terms which are only calculated to excite angry passions and render a reclamation more difficult, if not impossible. Although you feel certain he has trespassed against thee, still regard and treat him as a brother, and as a brother dearly beloved, whom you desire above all things to reclaim. Keeping this in view, you cannot go to any one else without trespassing against him, and becoming guilty of the same wrong which you hold against him. Nothing can more clearly violate the laws of Christ than to publish your complaints to others before you have pursued the course here enjoined. Under no pretence are you at liberty to get up a prejudice against him, by whispering, hinting, or in any way insinuating your complaint to others. The instruction is plain: "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." If you succeed in gaining him, no other person under heaven should ever know

that he has ever trespassed against thee. How often have churches been thrown into disorder and confusion by an aggrieved or an offended brother disregarding and disobeying this divine rule. Instead of going to the erring brother alone, how frequently nearly the whole church, and perhaps the world, become familiar with the matter before the offending brother has been visited alone. After going to A, B, and C, asking their opinion on the merits of the case, relating to them the circumstances, exciting their suspicions against the brother, under the pretence perhaps of asking their advice, it is too late to go to the offending brother alone, unless it be to confess your own wickedness in divulging the matter. The object of the private interview is thwarted by your own disobedience to the law of Christ. But supposing you have not communicated the matter to any one, now you are required to go to him. Your errand is to reclaim him in the spirit of meekness; you are not to go as a lion, but as a little child, considering your own infirmities and liability to err. And as old father Thomas used to tell us, "Mind and go alone. Try and leave the old man behind, he will be greatly in your way." You are on the King's business, therefore put off the old man with his affections and lusts, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; then you will not seize the offending brother by the throat and demand immediate payment, but you will remember how much your Lord has forgiven you, and how much your brethren have to forgive you; then will ye be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. If you fail to gain your brother, then take the next step, in the same kind and humble spirit, and if in this the brother cannot be reclaimed, tell it to the church. There leave it with the church, do not try to raise an unjust prejudice against the brother, but let the church carefully investigate the matter, and in the spirit and temper of the gospel make a decision. If all this be done in the manner directed, what the church shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what she shall loose on earth is loosed in heaven. Heaven has ratified and established this course. But it is wicked and impious to pretend to administer the discipline of the house of God in any other way, or when influenced by any other spirit. We conclude, therefore, and answer brother Fuller, that no member can be lawfully excluded from a church, except it be in conformity to this rule. But while we say this, we do not intend to be understood that private steps of labor are by this rule required in taking cognizance of offences which take place in open church meeting. A disorderly member is to be called to order by the church, when he acts disorderly in the presence of the church, as we understand this rule. But this must be done between him and the church alone. No member is at liberty to publish or even mention it out of the church; and the same childlike meekness is to be felt and exercised by the church as is required by the individual member. As we have before said, there are further instructions contained in the New Testament on the subject of discipline beside those in this chapter, but none which are not in perfect harmony with what Christ has here given. The apostles were inspired to set all these things in order, and to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It is perfectly safe then to follow their directions, and not only safe, but imperative; we cannot disregard them without involving disobedience to our King. Every instruction we can require is clearly presented by Christ and his apostles, to apply to all cases that can possibly call for the exercise of gospel discipline among the children of God. The greatest difficulties we meet arise from a lack of that childlike spirit which is enjoined by Christ in this eighteenth chapter, rather than from any lack of clearness in the law of Christ; for when christians are in that humble and spiritual frame they seldom, if ever, fail to settle all their differences; but in absence of that spirit their efforts are vain, for holiness becomes the house of the Lord forever.

The point on which we understand brother Fuller to desire us to be more definite is, whether there are any cases in which exclusion of members is lawful, where private labor in the first and second steps, according to the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, have not been formally taken. We answer, We think

there are. For instance, “A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” (Titus 3:10,11) An heretic is one who holds and utters heresy. The church is authorized to judge in this matter. One member shall speak in the church at a time, and the rest shall judge. That is, the church shall judge of what is said by each one, whether it be sustained by the Scriptures and by the experience of the saints; if it be contrary to the word and spirit of truth, admonish him. The church should admonish him, and all who hear him utter heresy should admonish him, tenderly and in love; and if he heed not the admonition, admonish him again, labor to convince him of his error; but after the first and second admonition reject him, if he be not reclaimed. A man that is an heretic may be a preacher, or he may be a private member in the church, but in either case he should be first admonished faithfully twice, and then if not reclaimed, reject him. We do not suppose that each member of the church should be required to go personally and separately to tell him of his faults between the two alone. If the heresy be known only to one, then let that one take the first, and if need be, the second step of gospel labor, and then tell it to the church. But if the heresy be uttered before the whole church, then let the whole church admonish him, between her and him alone, once, and then again, and if he persists in his heresy, reject or expel him from fellowship.

Further examples may be found: I Corinthians fifth and sixth chapters. If it be known that a member be an adulterer, a fornicator, an idolater, a thief, a drunkard, a reviler, or an extortioner, or covetous, we are required to at once withdraw all association with such; and Paul commands, in the name of the Lord Jesus, that such be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. “Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” But it is to be done when the church is gathered together, “and my spirit.” Let us be sure that the Spirit of Christ, which inspired Paul to lay down this rule, is with us, pervading the whole church; and he adds, “with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.” If we have and are actuated by that Spirit that inspired Paul, we may feel an assurance that we have the power of Christ, the authoritative power of Christ, in delivering such unto Satan, or in other words, in putting such manifestly wicked persons away from among ourselves.

Finally, whenever a christian is offended or aggrieved with his fellow christian, so that his fellowship is marred, he is bound to regard it as a personal matter, and go privately and tell him his fault, between him and the offending brother alone, and labor to gain, not to destroy his brother, and pursue in the subsequent steps laid down, let the offence or trespass be what it may; and if a brother bring his gift to the altar, and there remember that his brother has aught against him, let him leave there his gift, (unoffered) before the altar, and go and first be reconciled to his brother, and then come and offer his gift. Christians and churches are sometimes too backward in attending to what they may regard as but small matters, and allow them to grow and fester until they learn, by painful experience, how great a fire a little matter kindleth. A faultfinding spirit is unbecoming our holy profession, but christian faithfulness is indispensable to the peace of the church, and as members we are required to watch over one another, to exhort and to admonish one another in love. Nor is this obligation limited to any particular branch of the church of God. Although the church is scattered in her locality, and there are many organizations, yet they are all branches of the one church which is the body of Christ. Much is said of the independence of churches; that is, of their independence of each other, and of any ecclesiastical court above the church. This independence should be carefully considered, for although we acknowledge no pope, or bishop, no synod or association, as having a right to lord it over the churches, we must contend that the whole church is the body of Christ; all who are members of that one body are members one of another, so that the hand cannot say to the foot, “We have no need of thee. It

takes every member to make the body, and all the branches of the church to constitute the bride of Christ; and although all the several branches, if on gospel ground, have equal rights, still these rights are limited, for no church has a right to do wrong. All are bound to be governed by the law of Christ, and the several branches of the church are as vitally connected to each other as the members of a particular branch are one to another. Hence the duties of the churches of the same faith and order toward each other as churches do not differ essentially in this respect from the relative duties of members in a church. To illustrate: My two feet, though members alike of my body, claim to be independent of each other; one of them resolves to travel eastwardly, the other is equally determined to go to the west, how long can they maintain their independence and pursue their respective courses without dividing the body to which they both belong? A house or a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. How can two walk together except they are agreed? To maintain fellowship and harmony among the several branches of the church of God they all should be willing to compare notes together, to communicate with each other freely, to behold each other's order, and their steadfastness in the faith. Our real fellowship demands that we should be fully satisfied that we are all led by the same Spirit, that we are pursuing the same course, that we, as one body, are of one heart and one mind; for what use has one body of more than one heart or one mind? When churches become reckless of the esteem and fellowship of sister churches, they speak loudly of their independence, and seem to have forgotten that a haughty spirit goeth before a fall; while churches walking more cautiously in the valley of humiliation feel that they need the fellowship, the sympathy and the prayers of all their sister churches.

But as we have already extended this article to considerable length, we will submit what we have written to brother Fuller, apologizing to him at the same time for delaying so long to answer his request.

Middletown, N. Y.,
May 15, 1862.

I CORINTHIANS 15:5

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

A friend has desired us to explain how Christ was seen of the twelve, after his resurrection, seeing that the time which seems to be referred to was after the apostasy of Judas, and before Matthias or Paul were numbered with the apostles. We have had very little reflection on this subject; nor does it appear to us to be a matter of much importance, any farther than it may involve the accuracy of the apostle's statement in chronicling a matter of history. The vitally important fact of the resurrection of the crucified body of Christ from the dead was what the apostle was laboring to establish beyond all reasonable controversy, by testimony of the most convincing kind. Peter, who is called Cephas, had actually seen him in his resurrected body from his crucifixion, and after that he appeared to the disciples on the evening of the first day, and again after eight days, when Thomas was present. But at that time the literal number of the apostles present was eleven. Still we know that the apostles were very frequently called, *The Twelve*, as a name by which the apostles were designated from other disciples. Whether Paul here used the word *twelve* as a *proper noun*, or name, signifying, *The Apostles*

without reference to the number literally which were then and there present, or not, is of no very great importance to us, seeing that we know that subsequently to the time referred to when Cephas first saw him, after his resurrection, he was really seen by all the apostles, including Paul himself; as he says in the eighth verse, “And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” Hence, all the twelve apostles were qualified as competent witnesses, for they all had ocular demonstration that he was risen indeed. As the great theme of their preaching was Christ and the resurrection, they were to speak that which they knew to be true, and to testify that which they had seen; so that every one of them had a personal knowledge of his resurrection, as they all had seen him from his resurrection, in his risen body. And although Paul was as one born out of due time, yet not too late to see the risen Redeemer.

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

REMARKS ON RELIGIOUS REVIVALS

It is always cheering to the saints of God to witness the outpouring of his Spirit in quickening and bringing into his gospel fold the subjects of his saving grace, and the more clearly we can trace the work of God in revivals of religion, the more abundantly we rejoice. But wherever we detect the fingerprints of men in their production, our joy is dampened, and our confidence in them shaken. We have been a member in the Baptist church more than fifty years, and in that time have witnessed many revivals. Some that have afforded us inexpressible joy and gratitude to God, and others which have filled us with the most fearful apprehensions. That men, by their activity and zeal, can get up revivals of religion, or religious revivals, by stirring appeals to the passions and to the natural judgment of unregenerated sinners, which will attract and gather them in excited crowds, and produce intense excitement, and ultimately draw large numbers into the church, we cannot doubt, and for a time the cause may seem to flourish, but when the net has been drawn to the shore, a large proportion of the fish are found to be of no value to the church of God. Every plant, says the divine Master, which my Father has not planted, shall be rooted up. From this declaration we infer that every one that comes into the church without his saving grace, shall be expelled without his favor.

Well do we remember the old fashioned revivals, in which God’s holy arm was made bare for the salvation of sinners, when such things as protracted meetings, anxious benches, coming forward publicly for prayers, and the like, had not been introduced in the Baptist churches. Then the Baptists were one people and one communion the world over. When we heard of a revival among the Baptists we knew what the term signified; and those gathered into the churches were not offended at the doctrine of God’s sovereignty in the election, predestination, irresistible calling, and complete salvation of his children; nor with the faithful exposure of all manner of heresy, will-worship, delusion and idolatry abounding in the world. Then the Baptists, as a distinct people, were not reckoned with the popular denominations of the earth. Then they desired no revival that was or could be gotten up; they delighted only in those revivals which come down from above, in which they had the evidence that they were seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. But after the importation from England of a theory which was labeled “Fuller’s Gospel”, very soon the poison of Fuller’s heresy began to

spread, and many Baptist churches, which about that time began to enjoy some respite from the oppression of the New England Puritans, began to show symptoms of infection. The truth is, the Baptists never could endure prosperity to any great extent, without, like Israel of old, running into idolatry.

Following an under current of Fullerism, which had promised to raise the Baptists from the degradation of a dunghill (to use Fuller's classic language) to a respectable position among the popular religious denominations, came in stealthily at first, but more openly afterwards, a lusting after the leeks and onions, and especially the fleshpots of Egypt. This *manna* from above, on which the saints had been so long and so miraculously fed, began to be regarded as light food. The Anakims, their neighbors, who lived on the productions of the earth, grew up to be giants, and looked down with contempt upon the poor, little dwarfish Baptists; and under these circumstances many of the Baptists betrayed a desire to become like the nations round about them. Thus hardening their hearts, as in the day of provocation, became vain in their imaginations. This spirit of discontent and rebellion soon produced wide-spread murmuring among them; that the place where they dwelt was too strait, and some were heard to say, "Go to, let us make brick, and we will build a tower," etc. The more enterprising and zealous complained that their brethren were too inert, inactive, and withal, too tight-laced, folding their hands and waiting for God to build up his cause. But their active and sprightly companions sprang forward to steady the ark of God, which seemed to them to jostle on the new cart. A new era had begun, the law of Christ, as the only standard for faith and order in the house of God, was ignored by the enterprising, for they said, "If we wait for God to do the work, it will never be done. The day of miracles is past, and we must 'Up and make us gods to go before us.'"

The ministry which God had hitherto given and sustained among the Baptists, came to be regarded as inefficient, they were too illiterate, too slow, too tight-laced; or, in other words, too confident that what God had begun he would himself perform until the day of Jesus Christ, and so inert had they become that they declared that even if the olive should not blossom, and there should be no herd in the stall, they would still trust in the Lord, and even though he should slay them, they still would trust in him. The wise and prudent ones, therefore, determined to get these sleepy drones out of the way, and soon Baptist colleges began to arise, Theological Schools were instituted, Baptist State Educational Societies were chartered by the Legislature, Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes, for teaching "Every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord," were multiplied. Missionary Societies were organized, and plans matured for collecting Missionary funds. High sounding titles of a flattering kind were given to men. Presidents, directors, life membership, etc., became merchantable commodities, and were bought and sold in the market. The antiquated notion that it required grace to save sinners, where money was plenty, and that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," was thought to belong to a former age, was not adapted to this day of improvements. Baptist meeting houses now began to wear steeples and towers, or domes of imposing dimensions; bells were found necessary to drive the bad spirits away and call the multitudes together; a learned but graceless ministry filled the pulpits, and the Baptists began to look respectable in the adulterous eyes of the world. Now to fill up these costly and splendid edifices with paying converts something more attractive to the world than the preaching of Christ and him crucified, was deemed necessary. Protracted meetings, anxious benches, exciting appeals to the carnal passions of men, women and children were regarded as the most effective agencies, and hence they were brought into requisition. Much experimenting was required to demonstrate the comparative efficiency of the new inventions. Union prayer meetings, monthly concerts of prayer, with numerous other contrivances of men, were tried, with a view to either scare people into religion, or to scare religion into the people. At the time of

the introduction of these new things among professed Baptists, the party in favor of them was in the minority, but with all this machinery under their control they were soon multiplied into an overwhelming majority, and as there was no legitimate affinity between the old primitive order and these machine-made Baptists, a formal separation became inevitable, and ultimately took place. In the division the old order was called by a number of names, among which were, Old School or Primitive Baptists; the new order are known as New School or Missionary Baptists. These two kinds of Baptists have become so distinct that neither claim any relationship to the other. Indeed, the Primitive Baptists have no greater opposers or more bitter enemies to contend with on earth than are found in the ranks of the New School.

Perhaps brother Strickland and others are ready to ask us, What has this recital of past history to do with the revivals of which that brother writes? We reply, Simply this, to hold up the history of the past as a beacon upon the walls, that our dear brethren in the ecstasy of their feelings caused by the revival, may remember the rocks on which the Baptists of former times have been wrecked, divided and split.

By no means would we utter a word to dampen the spirits of precious brethren who are enjoying the gracious smiles of their covenant God. We have greatly mistaken the characters of brethren Strickland and Hume, if they would designedly depart from the ancient landmarks of Zion, or forsake the footsteps of the flock of our Redeemer. But, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," is an apostolic admonition. May we all heed it. There are a few expressions in brother Strickland's account of the revival that we feel constrained to notice, not in a fault-finding spirit, but in all love and tenderness. At our time of life, being now more than three score years of age, and about half that time have conducted the publication of this paper, we are aware that the time of our departure is not very far distant. We feel desirous, before the grave shall close over our mortal body, to faithfully, but affectionately, warn all our dear brethren in Christ to shun the appearance of evil in all things. Adhere strictly to the precepts and examples of our Lord and Master in all your religious deportment, and we trust that neither of our ministering brethren, nor any of the precious converts of their late revivals, will be hurt with us, or mistake our design in reviewing the expressions to which we have alluded.

First. Brethren, your meetings have been *protracted*. Now, where the Spirit of the Lord is manifested, drawing the hearts of the saints together, and in the display of his quickening power and grace, in causing the dead to hear the voice of the Son of God, and they feel disposed to protract such meetings for the worship of God and the edification of the saints, as did the apostles in the early days of christianity, we have not the slightest objection to offer. At such seasons we have sometimes felt to say,

"My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this;
Would sit and sing herself away
To everlasting bliss."

But to appoint a protracted meeting as a means of grace, or for the purpose of getting up a revival, or producing an excitement, is, in our view, like attempting to do by our enchantments that which we know can only be done by the mighty power of God himself. A meeting was once protracted at Jerusalem, after the ascension of our Redeemer, because Jesus had commanded the apostles to tarry at Jerusalem for a specific reason. And they, with other disciples, were in one place, and of one accord, until the day of Pentecost was fully come. A glorious revival took place while they were together, not as a result of their being together, but as the result of the Mediatorial triumph of the Son of God. They did not claim that they had gotten up this revival, but they assure us that it did not come up, but it came down. While they, in obedience to Jesus, were all of one accord in one place, "Suddenly there came a

sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2:2) Thus we have the testimony that this reviving sound came from above, and God poured out on them of his Spirit. So all spiritual blessings are given the saints in Christ, according as he hath chosen them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:3,4) And every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning. On this occasion a vast multitude were quickened, and made to gladly receive the word; and they were baptized, and added to the church. The apostles did not claim this as resulting from anything they had done to produce it, but told us frankly that this was something God had long had in store; it was that which had been spoken of by Joel more than seven hundred years before, and some seven hundred years before any of them were born. The protraction of the meeting in Indiana, we should judge, was like that at Jerusalem, were it not for a remark of brother Strickland in another part of the letter, which seems to reflect severely on ministers who have not enjoyed similar revivals, as dull, cold and inefficient, under whose labors no church can prosper. Now we must in all candor, and in kindness, contend that revivals that are at all profitable to the church of God, are not the result of the vivacity, warmth or efficiency of the minister. All the ministers of Christ are in themselves dull, cold and inefficient, until animated with a live coal from off the altar of the Lord. Paul, with all his inspiration, disclaimed all efficiency in himself, and exclaimed, “And who is sufficient for these things?” Or what is efficient? Jesus has said to his disciples, “Without me ye can do nothing.” Where then is the efficiency for these things?

Again, brother Strickland remarks, “Neither can any minister of Christ be profitable and fully efficient as a minister of the cross of Christ unless the church does her duty.”

Does our dear brother mean that the will or works of men or angels can give efficiency to the preached gospel? That the success of the gospel really rests upon duties faithfully performed by the church? How then did Paul affirm that the excellency of the gospel is not of us, but of God? Why are we told that Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but God alone can give the increase? We have no reason to doubt that the church, and all the saints, ministers included, are sometimes, if not at all times, remiss in the discharge of their duties, but we would greatly prefer to hear our brother say, When God pours out his Spirit upon the thirsty hill of Zion, the plants of his right hand planting will be revived, the church will awake to a sense of neglected duties, the dull ministers will lift up the voice with renewed energy, sinners will be pricked in the heart, and the redeemed of the Lord will be gathered into the fold, and all will be the result of those seasons of refreshing which come from the presence of the Lord.

We also believe that God has intimately connected the prosperity of his church and kingdom with the faithfulness of her members and her gifts, but we do not believe that connection is such as to make the prosperity of the kingdom to depend on the faithfulness of either the members or the gifts. For, “Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.” But when God’s set time to favor Zion comes, God sends her prosperity, and in a way that she shall see, and feel, and confess, that it is “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” And when God gives prosperity to his church, then, and only then, her vine will flourish, and her pomegranates will give a goodly smell. When he commands the north winds to blow, and the south winds to come, then the spices will flow out. This will enliven the dull minister if he be a servant of God, and this will wake up the sleepy spouse of the Redeemer, and thus the connection of faithfulness in the church, and her prosperity is effected, so that the praise is not of men, but of God.

That there are ministers and members of churches who are worldly, and allow much of the precious time allotted for social religious intercourse to be spent in worldly conversation, talking of politics, or

of the war, is very probable; but it is an exciting time, and we are yet in the flesh, compassed with infirmities, so that it is hardly to be expected that we can divest ourselves from all anxiety on the subject. But it is to be hoped that the saints will, as far as possible, divest themselves from these cares when we meet to worship God, and with the poet say,

“Far from my thoughts, vain world, be gone,
Let my religious hours alone;
Fain would my faith my Savior see,
But wait a visit, Lord, from thee.”

When Paul says we are laborers together with God, we are not to understand that we are fellow-laborers with God, or co-laborers, for we, that is, Paul and Apollos, were laborers together. They were not laboring to help God build the church, for his church is not made with hands, it is God’s building, an house, which stands eternal in the heavens. We are God’s husbandry, or plantation, or garden, where he implants the seeds of grace, which spring up and bring forth fruit to God. Paul and Apollos were laboring together in planting or preaching the word: “So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”

One remark further of brother Strickland we must notice, wherein he speaks of a class of preachers who have too much to say against error, especially the abominable, God-dishonoring and heaven-daring doctrines of Arminians, who give their (the Arminians) errors more attention than they give to the errors of their own brethren. (Brother Strickland will not probably classify us with that sort, as we sometimes pay some attention, as he will perceive, to errors of our brethren.) These, he complains, “Dwell long and loud on the doctrine of predestination and election, to the exclusion of practical and experimental religion.”

Now we are somewhat puzzled to know how to understand this complaint. What more exalted theme has ever moved the tongues or thrilled the hearts of men or angels, than that of the doctrine of predestination and election, we cannot conceive. Is not the predestinating government of God worthy of our loudest, longest notes? Why should they not dwell long and loud upon the doctrine affirmed by the Holy Ghost, proclaimed by God himself, reiterated by patriarchs and prophets, heralded by inspired apostles, and lying as the basis of all our hopes for heaven and immortality? How the preaching of this doctrine can exclude practical or experimental religion, we cannot understand, since no practice or experience can be worth having in its absence. If God has not chosen us in Christ, and predestinated us to the adoption of children, and if God hath not before ordained us to walk in good works, all our practice and all our experience will leave us far short of heaven and eternal happiness. “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” If there be no election and predestination, then there can be no inheritance of glory for us or for anybody else. Then let the brethren shun not to proclaim election and predestination, and expose the abomination of Antichrist, and exhort the saints to stand fast in the doctrine of God our Savior, and to walk in all his ordinances, and see that in the excitement of revivals none be admitted to fellowship who do not love the doctrine of salvation by grace alone.

We trust that our brother will not be offended with us for the candor with which we have remarked on his letter, but carefully examine the points to which we have called his attention, and may the Lord give us all the light and wisdom we need, and crown us in his kingdom. Amen.

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

GENESIS 2:10

Brother Beebe: – According to your receipts, as published, you must feel the pressure of the hard times, as we also do; but I hope the Lord will sustain you, and keep you from all the delusions of the world. Please give your views on Gen. 2:10, “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.” Now our branches come from different sources, and unite in one; but it appears this river parted, but became into four heads.

Yours in hope of eternal life,
Samuel Seitz

REPLY

Eden signifies pleasure, or delight, and may represent, figuratively, heaven the paradise of God, or the throne of God and the Lamb, from whence John saw a pure river of life proceeding, clear as crystal. The garden in like manner may represent the church of God, which is frequently called a garden, the garden of the Lord. Truly the church of God is watered and refreshed by the pure water of life which comes to her from the throne or government of God and the Lamb; that is, the Mediatorial throne of our Redeemer. This is the River, the streams whereof make glad the city, or garden of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. The channel, course, and direction of the waters of life are not governed by the laws of nature, but by the sovereign power of that throne from whence they proceed. All earthly or natural streams and rivers with which we are familiar receive contributions from various branches which empty into them, swelling and increasing them. But the river of life flowing to the church of God is full and sufficient of itself, and can admit of no supplies from any other source. And, as it is designed to reach every department of the Garden of the Lord, it is divided, in an experimental sense, into four heads, answering to the four points of the compass, like the molten sea in the temple, placed on twelve molten oxen, with their faces towards the east, the west, the north, and the south. Thus we see in the figure that our glorious Lord is the place of broad rivers and streams, etc. We have neither time nor space to enlarge, but submit the above to brother Seitz.

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

LETTER FROM ELDER SAMUEL TROTT

Our readers will be pleased to learn that we have at length received a letter from our venerable and beloved father in Israel, and to be informed that he still lives, and is in the enjoyment of ordinary health. Living in the vicinity of Fairfax C. H., Virginia, the unhappy war between the two sections of our country caused a suspension of mailing facilities, so that from the time the war broke out all correspondence between him and us has been cut off until recently; the Federal Government now occupying that section of Virginia, has re-established a post office at Fairfax C. H.

It is well known that the contending armies have been located during a large part of the time in his immediate vicinity, and the ground has been alternately occupied by both parties, and for several months, in order to be where he could get to and attend the several churches of his pastoral charge, he has been obliged to remain absent from his home, as the pickets of the armies were stationed for a long time between his residence and the churches of his charge.

For the satisfaction of his numerous friends, we extract from his private letter to us, which is dated June 26, 1862, the following:

“Myself and family are in usual health, excepting I have at present a cold, and I find that age is fast weakening my bodily strength, and, probably my mind: though that is a something we are not so apt to discover ourselves, except in regard to memory. Exposed as we have been, in being contiguous to the armies of both sides, we have been remarkably preserved from insults, and from being plundered. I can but be astonished at the goodness of God in thus shielding and protecting us, and admire that we should have been thus favored above others around, when the least deserving it at his hands.

“I have not seen brother Leachman for some months, though I hear from him frequently. Living so nigh Manassas Junction, he has been much annoyed and interrupted. Since the advance of the Federal Army to that place he has had, with his family, to leave his home, and seek a residence in a more retired place. He has not been privileged to preach but little for the last few months.

I have received several numbers of the *Signs of the Times* from friends in Alexandria and Washington. And from what I learn through them, most of our brethren are still living. It is a favor granted by their heavenly Father, or it would not have been so. Yet there can be but little personal happiness anticipated in living in these times, only as any may hope to live to see the result of what God is bringing about by this war.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
July 1, 1862.

OUR SPRING ASSOCIATIONS

The Baltimore Association was held in May at Harford, Maryland, and we learn from brethren who attended that the season was pleasant and refreshing. It was not our privilege to meet with them, as we had intended, but we rejoice to learn that the churches and brethren are steadfast in the faith, and in peace and harmony among themselves.

We were permitted to attend the Delaware, at Bryn Zion, Delaware, where we enjoyed a refreshing season from the presence of the Lord. No discordant sound was heard during the meeting. The churches are generally small, but composed of members who, like those John saw with the Lamb in Rev. 18, are, “Called and chosen, and faithful.” Brother Thomas Barton, who has labored long and faithfully in the bounds of this Association, though pressed with age and infirmities, was able to attend, and in his preaching and conversation, seemed to still retain the “dew of his youth.” Elder Ephriam Rittenhouse is doing good service among these churches. His views of divine truth seem to be clear and vivid, and his

gifts manifestly of the Lord. He is in the vigor of life, and gives evidence that he prefers Jerusalem above his chief joys. These two devoted servants of God comprise the ministry, and their time is divided among the several churches.

From the Delaware Association we came through Philadelphia, where there is a small church of our faith and order, who meet regularly on the first day of each week, like the Primitive saints, in a *large upper room*, and devote the time to prayer and praise, speaking to themselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs. They have no settled pastor, but occasionally receive visits from ministers of Jesus, as they pass through the city, or as they visit them expressly for the purpose. Passing through that city, we visited Southampton church. We spent two or three days in the company with Elder Daniel L. Harding, who has been sorely afflicted with disease for a long time, and has had to endure several surgical operations on his person. We were pleased to find his general health somewhat improved. He has been able to fill most of his regular appointments in the church; but unable, from the nature of his complaints, to travel abroad much. He has been graciously supported in his painful afflictions, and we hope and pray that he may be restored to health, if it be the pleasure of the Lord; for we esteem him as a precious brother, whose gifts are highly appreciated in the church, and among our churches generally. We spent the Sunday with him at the Southampton church, preached twice on that day at their meeting-house. Their meetings are well attended, the church is large, and the brethren and sisters seemed to be dwelling together in love and unity. With the brethren of that church we came on, being brought on our way by the kindness of our dear brother, Deacon J. V. Willard, to the Delaware River Association, which was held with the Second Hopewell church, at Harberton, N.J.

This meeting was well attended, and the season was delightful. All the brethren and sisters seemed to enjoy it. At present there are but four churches in this Association, but the aggregate number is about four hundred members. The First Hopewell church contains two hundred and eight members; the Kingwood, sixty-nine; Southampton, eighty-six; and Second Hopewell, thirty. Elder P. Hartwell is the pastor of the First and Second Hopewell churches. His ministry among them has been remarkably blessed, not only in the great ingathering of members, but more especially in edifying, instructing and confirming the saints in the truth. Elder Conklin is pastor of the Kingwood church, and his labors are abundantly blessed to the church, especially in his faithful and unremitting labors in word and doctrine. His general health has been much better for the last six or eight years than for many years previous to that time. Elder D. L. Harding, as we have already mentioned, is with the Southampton church. These three previous brethren supply faithfully the four churches, and as far as they have opportunity extend their labors in traveling abroad, comforting and confirming the churches generally.

Our own, the Warwick Association, was held on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, after the first Sunday in June, with the New Vernon church. The first day of our session was very rainy, but on the second and last days of the feast, the assembly was very large for our country. We were favored with the attendance of a goodly number of our brethren in the ministry from abroad; all of whom came to us in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace, and with one accord preached Jesus Christ and him crucified, greatly to the comfort and edification of all the saints.

The next Association we were permitted to attend was the Chemung. This was held with the Chemung church at Waverly, in a very pleasant and commodious meeting-house, very kindly offered for our use by the New School Baptists of that place. The churches of this Association are generally small. All the old ministers have been called from their labors on earth to their crown in glory, excepting our venerable and dear old brother, Elder Joseph Beaman. But God has not left himself without witnesses in that part of his vineyard. Within a few years past, two brethren of promising gifts have been raised

up and set apart to the work of the gospel ministry in their bounds, namely, Elders Chester Schoonover, of Asylum, Pennsylvania, and P. W. Doud, of Mainsburgh, Pennsylvania. Elder John Donaldson and Elder K. Hollister also supply, a portion of the time, some of the destitute churches. This meeting was well attended, and was principally devoted to the preaching of the word, and all seemed to regard it as a precious season. From Chemung, we went on in company with Elders G. Conklin and W. Housel, and attended a meeting on Monday with the little church near the Horse Heads, where we were joined by Elders Beaman and Smith, and on the day following, proceeded on our way by railroad to Hornellsville, where we were met by brethren and teams to convey us to the Conference of Western New York. This meeting was held with South Dansville church, which is under the pastoral care of Elder N. D. Rector. This conference is chiefly composed of the brethren scattered abroad in the Western and Northwestern parts of this State, many of whom are living remote from any regularly organized church of our order, who seldom have the opportunity of social intercourse with their brethren. Elders Beaman, Smith, Conklin, Housel, and Beebe were present with Elder Rector, and we enjoyed a pleasant and interesting time.

At all of these meetings Christ and his cross was all our theme. Although our country is involved in a merciless and cruel war in which thousands and even hundreds of thousands of the flower of our country are being sacrificed on the bloody altar, not a lisp of any thing of a political character was heard from any of the pulpits, nor during the discussions of those meetings. Peace and harmony prevailed, over all the clamor of war; and the spirit of "Peace on earth, and good will toward men" seemed to pervade the hearts of all the saints. Earthly thrones may crumble to the dust, and the very best forms of human governments may be uprooted, nations, kingdoms and states may be dashed to atoms, but of the increase of the government and peace of the Wonderful Counsellor, there shall be no end. (Isaiah 9:7) "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom that can not be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:28,29)

Middletown, N. Y.,
July 1, 1862.

FELLOWSHIP

In our last number we copied the Circular Letter of the Delaware Association, written by Elder E. Rittenhouse, on the subject of Gospel Fellowship. It is a well written article on that subject, and worthy of the serious consideration of all the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. It contains many important suggestions, arguments, demonstrations, admonitions and exhortations which are of vital importance. In reperusing and admiring that letter we have been led to extend the consideration of the subject of fellowship to the numerous branches of the kingdom of our Redeemer. In the letter referred to, the fellowship of the saints, and that in their relation to the church, has been as fully treated upon as could well be in the limits of a Circular Letter, but it may be useful to consider the relation which exists among sister churches of the same faith and order. The entire kingdom of Christ, embracing as it does the whole mystical body, of which Christ is the Head, is known in the Scriptures as the general

assembly and church of the firstborn. (Hebrews 12:23) And although some of the constituents of it are now in heaven, some on earth, and some yet unborn, she is a unit.

“The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make;
All join in Christ, the living Head,
And of his grace partake.”

Paul says, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Eph. 4:4-6) The same relationship exists throughout the whole church of God, and all her branches, as that which exists between each branch and its members. The union is vital, it is a union of life, and the life of this union is God himself; for he, as we have seen, is over all, through all and in all the branches and members. Christ is the life, and our life is hid with Christ in God. This spiritual and divine life is the foundation of fellowship, and constitutes each branch and each member the fellow of every other branch or member. Thus the smitten Shepherd is the fellow of the Lord of hosts. (Zech. 13:7) And through him our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (I John 1:3) It is therefore impossible to extend this fellowship, as shown in the Circular, beyond the body of Christ, to any foreign substance, however closely that substance may be attached by art or by nature. The christian is himself, while in the flesh, an illustration of this. He cannot fellowship his own depraved, wicked nature, which is so very closely connected with his spiritual identity, but has to crucify the old man with its affections and lusts. There is no kind of discipline he can apply that will bring his flesh and spirit into fellowship, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other. Flesh is born of the flesh, and spirit is born of the Spirit – is born of God. The flesh has low, groveling and earthly propensities, appetites and desires, but the spirit loathes them, and only has heavenly, spiritual and holy aspirations. How then can there be any fellowship between parties so opposite and hostile? Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor the things of the Spirit of God. (See I Cor. 2:14; 15:50.) Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. “For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?” (II Cor. 6: 14, 15)

This gospel fellowship being based on immortal life in Christ, permeates all the branches or individual members of the church of God, because it cannot be separated or divided from Christ as its vitality. In this fellowship all who are born of God are members of Christ. (I Cor. 12:27) “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.” (I Cor. 12:12-14)

If then every individual member is an integral part of the church of Christ, and every branch of the church of Christ is an integral part of the body of Christ, wherein do the several branches of the church of Christ differ in their relation to each other, as churches, from that of one member of the same church to a fellow-member of the same?

So far as fellowship is concerned, the several churches are but the several branches of the one church. Churches or branches may hold a kind of nominal connection together, without being animated by the same life, or joined together in the same judgment, but gospel fellowship cannot exist where this foundation for it is not found. The evidences required of an applicant for church fellowship are such as shall satisfy the church to whom such application is made that the applicant has passed from death unto

life, and has received of God that life which alone can unite to the church. The fruits of this life are joy, peace, love, faith, etc., and when presented are satisfactory, and those who show them are welcomed, through the ordinance of baptism, into the church. This makes the baptized convert not only a member of the branch of the church into which he is received, but he is baptized into the whole body of Christ, and comes manifestly into the fellowship of all sister churches of the same faith and order. If this were not so, he would be required to be baptized in every branch of the church with whom he communes, or whose fellowship he desires to enjoy. If the church to which he has applied be a gospel church, and in gospel order, and in that order has received and baptized him, he is no more a stranger or foreigner, but he is become a fellow-citizen with the saints, with all the saints of God, in heaven and on earth, and is of the household of faith, and built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the foundation and chief corner-stone. (Eph. 2:20,2 1) His fellowship is with the holy city, new Jerusalem, which came down from God out of heaven, and not merely of some part of it; it is in common with all the saints of God, and as a citizen he cannot be lawfully disfranchised, except by the same law of the city which is binding on all the citizens of the same commonwealth. His standing is upon the same one foundation which bears up all the building, and it being the foundation of the apostles and prophets, no delinquency on his part, or action on the part of the church, can deprive him of the fellowship of the saints, that would not, were the circumstances otherwise alike, expel from fellowship the apostles and prophets. When a church is in gospel order, and in the Spirit, and according to the laws of Christ, receives into or expels from fellowship, what is thus loosed in earth we believed is loosed also in heaven; whatsoever she binds on earth is also bound or approved in heaven.

Much is said of the independence of churches; but let us tread softly here. In what sense, and to what extent, are churches independent? These are very important inquiries. We believe she is, when considered in her indissoluble union with her divine Head, and acting under his law, according to its letter and spirit, independent of the world, the flesh and the devil. She is independent of popes, cardinals, friars, of kings and potentates of the earth, and of ecclesiastical courts, councils and dictators of all sorts and kinds. But is she independent of Christ and of his laws? Has she any right to transcend or to transgress any of them? Has she a right to do wrong, or to transact a particle of business, either in receiving, governing or excluding her members, without a warrant from the law of Christ? Nor is any branch of the church, as we understand this subject, any more independent of her sister churches than one member is of the other members of the same church. Can one church say to another church, We have no need of thee? "For the body is not one member, but many. But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." (I Cor. 12:14,18-21)

The saints and the churches are not only members of the one body of Christ, but they are members one of another; so that they can no more be independent of each other than they can be independent of the body. Remember, God hath set the members in the body as it hath pleased him. It hath, therefore, pleased God that the members of the body shall be mutually dependent one on another. The hands and feet and all other members are dependent on the eye to see, the eye dependent on the ear to hear, the feet to walk, and the hands to do what the other members are not qualified to do; but all these gifts belong to the church, and all are for the edifying of the body of Christ. That the whole body may travel, it is indispensably necessary that there shall be harmony in all the members, each duly appreciating the importance of all the rest. The perfect harmony and symmetry of the body has been clearly set forth in the Circular alluded to, but we wish to apply the same idea to the whole Zion of God, which is in her gospel order the perfection of beauty. No branch of the church of God is or can be independent of all

the other parts. No member of the whole body detached from the body can independently subsist. How would an eye, an ear, or a hand or foot, see, hear, labor or walk independently of its union and fellowship with the whole body? Separated from the body, they cease not only to perform their functions for the common benefit of all the body, but in their disconnection they cease to participate in the vitality of the body, and therefore perish. ‘Where two or three,’ saith the Savior, “are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst.” Ten thousand may voluntarily assemble together of their own accord, without being gathered together in his name. However large or small the gathering may be, the essential points are that it is in his name, by his authority, and that Christ himself is the grand centre of attraction; that he, as their Life, gives vitality, by his laws, as their rule of government, and by his Spirit, having a desire to walk in all his ordinances, of one accord, of one mind, of one spirit, and all in one hope of their calling. Such is the church of God.

We are led to examine this subject from a consideration that a wrong impression has prevailed to some extent in regard to the independence of churches. The impression seems to be entertained, at least by some, that each branch of the church of God is invested with a right to act for itself in all matters of faith and practice, without reference to the approval or disapproval of the other branches of the same church. If this impression be correct, where is the Scripture to sustain it? How is fellowship to be maintained on that principle? The church of Christ in all her departments must be of one mind, of one heart and of one judgment, or their professed fellowship for each other is deceptive and hypocritical. If all the churches, as we call them, meaning the branches of the one undivided church of God, are led by the one Spirit, ruled by the same law of Christ, and joined in the same judgment, all the acts of each will be the acts of the whole. This will, we conceive, apply to the reception, government and exclusion of members. But if some churches hold themselves so independent of the others that they do not desire or respect the concurrence of their sister churches in their action, the one may receive members, and such members be denied fellowship and communion with sister churches, or they may expel members, and the expelled members still be held in full fellowship with the other churches; but how then can all be called sister churches, of the same faith and order? Whatever faith they may profess to hold, their order is far from being the same.

To avoid such confusion and irregularity it has been the practice of the churches of the same faith to maintain a correspondence with each other, through associations, conferences and other meetings, and by dismissing and receiving members by letter, and such other friendly correspondence as may be convenient from time to time. And when difficulties arise in which there is an important diversity of judgment among the members of one church, which involves a question of the common order of the house of God, if such church desires to maintain the union and confidence of her sister churches, it has been our practice to say to them, “Come and behold our order.” Or to call on them to send approval and faithful brethren to aid the church in the adjustment of her difficulties. Whenever churches decline this course, and refuse to be advised, or to exhibit their order to their sister churches, suspicion is excited that something is wrong, and will not bear investigation without exposing disorder. “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:20,21)

Middletown, N. Y.,
July 15, 1862.

JOHN 13:14, 15

Dear Brother Beebe: – I have received a great deal of comfort and satisfaction in reading your editorials in the *Signs of the Times*, on different portions of the scriptures, and if it is not asking too much, I would like to have you give your views in full on John 13:14,15, and its connection. By doing so you will greatly oblige a well wisher to the truth, though an unworthy sister, if a sister at all.

M.C. Townsend.

REPLY

The text on which this sister desires our views reads thus: “If I then, your lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

We have on former occasions given our views on this subject, but we have given them only as *our views*, desiring our readers to compare them carefully and prayerfully with the scriptures as the infallible standard of truth. Fallible and imperfect as our views are, either in our own estimation, or as they may be regarded by others, we do not feel at liberty to withhold them when called for by our kindred in Christ, on any part of Divine revelation. All the gifts in the church are the common property of the church; for we are members one of another.

We have more delicacy in attempting to repeat our views on this than on other portions of the word, because we are conscious that some of our most highly esteemed brethren differ in their understanding of it; and until it shall please the Lord to give a clearer light on the subject, an agitation may produce discord and darken counsel by words without knowledge. Many of our churches, especially in the South and Southwestern parts of our country, understand and practice the washing of each other’s feet as a church ordinance, to be literally performed at some of their social meetings. While other churches understand the subject as having a figurative or emblematical signification to be observed in a metaphorical sense. But by a mutual understanding those churches agree to bear with each other, and do not make this difference of their understanding of this subject a bar of fellowship or communion. Still the advocates of both views appear to be somewhat sensitive on the subject, and so much so that an argument on the one side seldom fails to elicit a reply from the other. We have thought that under existing circumstances it were better for us either to let the matter rest until the Lord shall give us clearer light on the subject, or if impressed to discuss the subject, let the discussion be so conducted as to avoid saying or writing anything that can be construed to the disparagement of each other’s sincerity or laudable motives.

The argument of brethren who practice washing each other’s feet literally is that the words of our Lord to his disciples in our text and its connection seem clear, pointed, and emphatic. “Ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” This seems at least to them to be a sufficient authority to practice literally according to the example; and they cannot see how their brethren whom they love and fellowship can view it in any other light.

On the other hand, it is argued that the performance had a mystical or figurative significance which Jesus himself told the apostles that they did not at that time understand, which should afterwards be made known unto them. The apostles most certainly knew what he had done literally, for the custom of washing feet as an act of hospitality, kindness, and humility had prevailed for ages, both among Jews and Gentiles. What was it then that they did not at that time comprehend or know in this example and

precept which he had so positively enjoined on the apostles: for they were all apostles whose feet Jesus had washed? Can any of the brethren discover anything in the literal observance of washing feet which the apostles at that time could not understand? Why could they not understand the literal performance as well, if not better, than we can? But we must not dispute that there was something in and about this example and precept which even the apostles did not then understand, for to doubt this would be to doubt the plain words of Christ. What they did know was what was literally performed, that they were accustomed to, as a common practice already existing among them; but what they did not know was the figurative or spiritual application of the subject. This they should afterward know, for it was of the most vital importance to them and to the church of God that they should know, and fully comprehend, because they were very soon to receive from him the commission to “Go teach all nations, baptizing them,” etc. “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. 28:19,20) The instructions given in our text were certainly among the things which the apostles were commissioned to teach the baptized believers to observe. And to teach them to observe them was not merely to teach them that they were required, but how, or in what way they were to be observed or obeyed. Therefore, although they did not at that time understand them, when they should be endowed with power from on high, when baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, when they should sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, then the Holy Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, would bring all these things whatsoever Christ had commanded them to their remembrance, and qualify them to teach all the spiritual tribes how to observe them. So it was certain they should know the true meaning of the example and precept in our text in good time to teach it to the Gentile churches, and how to observe it. The importance of this lesson to the apostles, and through them to the churches, or baptized believers, may be inferred by Christ’s words to Peter, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” Can it be possible that the literal washing of Peter’s feet in water was what secured to him an interest in Jesus? Or, does not this expression clearly imply a washing of which this literal washing was but a figure? All who have a part with Jesus are said to be washed by him in his own blood, from all iniquity; that he hath washed and cleansed them to himself as a peculiar people; that he hath saved them by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. In this cleansing all who are washed by him are cleansed every whit. If this is fairly implied, then that which the apostles were afterwards to know and teach had a deeper and more important signification than the mere washing of each other’s feet literally in water.

Aside, however, from all speculation or conjecture as to what was designed to be signified by the washing of the apostles’ feet, it must be conceded that the true import was finally perfectly understood by the apostles, and as they were expressly commanded to teach the baptized nations to observe *all things whatsoever* Christ had commanded them, we must either conclude that they have taught the true and proper import of washing feet, or that they have proved disobedient to their high vocation. To admit that they have withheld any instruction which they were commissioned to give would be to question their infallibility as inspired apostles, and, therefore, shake our confidence in them in the instructions which they have given. Though as men they were but men, and compassed about with all the infirmities common to the saints; yet, as apostles they were inspired by the Holy Ghost, so that what they bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what they loosed on earth is loosed in heaven. As princes they rule in judgment, and their decisions on all subjects are final and conclusive, binding on all saints on earth what God has ratified in heaven, and loosing the saints from all obligations, religiously, that are not embraced in their instructions to the churches of the saints. If this conclusion be incorrect, what safety is there in relying on their decisions and instructions, as to the ordinances and order of the church of God? And if we regard the inspired apostles as the infallible exponents of all the laws and

institutions of Christ which are binding on the saints; then we enquire how have they enjoined on us the obligation to wash one another's feet? Have they anywhere in the "Acts of the Apostles" or in their Epistles to the churches, by precept or by example, enjoined the literal washing of each other's feet? No instance of the kind is found in their practice among themselves, nor in the instructions to the saints. Shall we then conclude that they have disobeyed their commission? – that there is anything which Christ commanded them which they have failed to teach us to observe? None, we trust, will take that position. Better then for us to conclude that they have taught us to observe this instruction of our Lord as they understood it when its true import was made plain to them. We have seen that Christ in washing his disciples has made them clean every whit. Is there any sense in which the apostles have taught the saints to imitate the work of the Redeemer in what he has done to cleanse and purify them? We certainly are not taught that we can expiate sin, or that, our works, or even our blood, could purge the conscience of men from dead works to serve the living God; but we are frequently admonished to imitate the example of our Lord in watching over each other – in exhorting – admonishing, and praying for one another – not to suffer the defilement of disorder, or disobedience, or transgression of any of the laws of Christ as interpreted and expounded by his apostles to rest upon one another. The unparalleled love which Christ has manifested for his people in putting away their sins by the sacrifice of himself has been clearly pointed out as an example to be copied by all the saints. We were told to love one another even as Christ has loved us and given himself for us; to forgive one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it *with the washing of water, by the word*. that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

This washing of water, by the word, is not water literally, but by the word. A close and circumspect adherence to the word, both in regard to each of us individually, and to our brethren relatively, is cleansing in its nature, as water literally is cleansing as an element to natural things. Peter says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." The word of truth, and obedience to the truth purifies the souls from error as water cleanseth things which are washed in it. Hence it is called the washing of water by the word. The feet are those members of the body by which we walk, and which in walking come continually in contact with the earth, and are therefore most exposed to defilement. So in our spiritual travel the saints are in conflict with the defilement of the earth, the world, etc.; and the care which Christ did so fully manifest for the purity of his disciples should be imitated by all his children, one to another. Now if the apostles were made to understand the lesson in our text to signify that the saints were to watch over one another in love, to bear each other's burdens, to exhort and admonish each other in love, to endeavor to reclaim an erring brother or sister in the spirit of meekness and humility, each considering himself, that he is also liable to become defiled, by instructing one another, teaching each other the way of the Lord more perfectly, each esteeming others better than himself, in sacrificing our own personal comfort or accommodation for the benefit of the saints, with a readiness to lay down even our lives, if need be, for the promotion of the purity and comfort of the saints, then they have not failed to teach us by their examples, (for we have them for examples) and by their doctrine, to wash one another's feet in a spiritual sense. This course is washing, as it cleanseth from defilement, and as the washing of the weary wayworn traveler's feet in water is refreshing and healthy, so these services duly rendered, in the spirit of christian humility, are truly refreshing and comforting to those whose feet shall stand on Zion's hill. Beholding them, we may exclaim, "How beautiful are the feet of them who publish peace," etc.

“As through this wilderness we roam
And onward march toward heaven our home,
No not the filth of sin or earth
Defile our feet, or shame our birth.
Our feet with gospel grace well shod,
Dress’d in the armor of our God,
In all our walks let us be seen,
With hearts, and hands, and feet all clean.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 1, 1862.

II PETER 1:10

(Reply to Elder James Strickland)

As in his letter he has made several appeals to us on various propositions, before we attempt an exposition of the text on which he desires our views, we will endeavor to respond to them briefly. We say briefly, because it would require much time and space to write elaborately on each of them.

First. We will remark that we were not led to a misapprehension of the general purpose of his former letter by his having *unfortunately* used the term “protracted,” as by a more careful review of our former remarks it will be found that we did not object to the protraction of meetings when the Spirit so directs, or circumstances require; we objected only to the idea of protracted meetings for the purpose of getting up revivals or religious excitements. We did not understand from brother Strickland’s letter that the meeting at Francisco was previously appointed as a protracted meeting for any such purpose, but being assembled, the meeting was protracted. Brother Strickland misapprehends us if he understood us to object to prayers being made for mourners in Zion. All the inhabitants of Zion are mourners at times; sometimes they mourn their own leanness and barrenness, their trials, tribulations or persecutions, and all the saints are at all times in public or private duly authorized to pray for each other, as the word directs and the Spirit indites; but still to call on either saint or sinner to signify by rising up, by coming to some particular altar or seat, or by extending their hand, or by any other sign or signal, is in our view very objectionable. First, because in so doing we assume a mediatorial position between the sinner and his God which would mislead them to rely on our prayers to commend them to God, instead of teaching them that we are just as dependent on God to sustain us as they are for deliverance from their distress. There are examples in the word in which the prayers of the saints are asked for, but if there be any instance where the primitive disciples called on their congregations to signify by motion or gesture, movement or sign, that they desired their prayers, we have overlooked it.

Second. Much mischief grows out of such proceedings sometimes. For instance, at a revival meeting, even if the revival be genuine, there are often those present whose natural sympathies are touched; they feel alarmed for the moment, and on being called on they signify that they wish the prayers of the minister; by their public expression of the desire they feel that they have committed themselves publicly as seekers, or as wishing to become christians, and having done so, after the excitement has

subsided they are induced to make a profession of religion, when they would not think of doing so if they had not thus prematurely committed themselves.

We were sincere in saying that we had mistaken these brethren if they would designedly depart from the ancient landmarks of Zion. We did not think they really designed what their practice seemed to imply, and for that very cause we felt constrained to warn them to shun the appearance of evil. What we understand by the efficiency of the ministry, is that they be divinely qualified to minister in holy things, by such gifts, and only such, as Christ has given unto men for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ. If this be what our brother means by efficiency, we agree that the prosperity and benefit of the church is promoted by the gifts which Christ has so bestowed for the benefit of the whole body. Baptist ministers, in common with others, not beyond others, may be too much occupied in discussing worldly subjects, and a faithful admonition to such is seasonable and proper, if it be administered in the spirit of the gospel; instead of admiring errors among the Baptists, which we would condemn in others, we look for nothing else but errors in others, and therefore an error in a professed Baptist is more unbecoming and out of place, in our estimation, than anywhere else.

We may be under the deceptive influence of a beam in our own eye, but we are greatly deceived indeed if we do not discover a mote which we would gladly remove from the vision of our brother. We confess that the different view which we take of some of the same things seems to indicate that there is some defect somewhere in our vision, we do not seem to see the same things precisely alike; this may be owing to beams or motes. May the Lord enable all his watchmen to see eye to eye.

Brother Strickland says: "If our ministers had been as careful in pointing out and keeping before the brethren their errors as they have the errors and wrongs of others, it would have been better for the Baptists, and we to-day would not have had to complain of the cold, lifeless, barren and dead state of religion that we do." This is saying considerable. Well, however derelict other Baptist ministers may have been in pointing out the errors, or what are supposed to be the errors, of brethren, brother Strickland and ourselves will not be charged with the sin of altogether overlooking or winking at the errors of each other. But although we have been for many years endeavoring to point out the errors of our dearest brethren, and not insensible that we have many of our own also, which our brethren have kindly borne with, still we feel much coldness, barrenness and deadness. But we have serious doubts if a kind of animation resulting from our own faithfulness, either in admonishing our brethren, or anything else that we can do, would be the kind of life and activity that either brother Strickland or ourselves would be satisfied with. Both of us would rather say, If the Lord shall quicken our poor, cold hearts, and animate our sluggish minds by the life-giving and life-reviving power of his Holy Spirit, it would make us more active and more faithful in pursuing every good word and work.

"Too much time and labor," you say, "has been given to the subject of doctrinal preaching, and not enough to the practical part of the gospel." And this you demonstrate by the testimony, which to us is new, that there are to-day a dozen different factions in the United States calling themselves Old School Baptists, utterly refusing to correspond with each other; all in consequence of some doctrinal difference. Admitting for instance the whole force of this testimony, we cannot see that it proves, but rather disproves, the correctness of the position, for the testimony only shows that those who are so divided on the subject of doctrine are not sufficiently posted on doctrine. If they were better instructed in doctrine they would be more united. If the difference were in their practice it would look more to us as though too little time and labor had been bestowed on practical subjects. Brother Strickland we trust will not undertake to say that the preaching of the doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine of God our

Savior, has a tendency to divide the children of God; if so, we would infer that it ought not to be preached at all.

How many sorts of people may claim to be Old School Baptists who do not believe our doctrine, and who are not in correspondence with us, we do not know, but we did not think there were so many as our brother speaks of but if there be “a dozen,” it to our mind only shows the greater necessity for a more faithful and constant preaching of the doctrine.

Brother Strickland says: “No denomination that I am acquainted with seems to boast of the correctness of their doctrinal sentiments as much as the Old School Baptists, and yet none are more divided among themselves than the Baptists are.” Truly, if a dozen or more factions, holding different doctrinal sentiments, and having no correspondence, fellowship or communion with each other, are still but one denomination or church, it must be admitted that there is much division in the denomination. But is it fair to include as any part of the church of Christ any factions or parties who do not hold our sentiments, and who have no correspondence with us, merely because they choose to call themselves Old School Baptists? On the same principle may we not include as belonging to the true church of Christ all who profess to be christians, and so consolidate Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Mormons, Quakers and Dunkards, with many other names, as the same one church, only somewhat divided in their doctrine and practice? We hold that all who are not with us are against us, and all who have gone out from us have gone out that it might be made manifest that they were not of us. The church of Christ is a unit, and though there may be threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, yet Christ’s bride is but one, she is the only one of her mother, the choice one of her that bare her.

We admit that the faithful preaching of the gospel presents the gospel in all its excellence, which cannot be done without presenting the experience and practice of the gospel, but we do not think the minister of Christ can dwell too long or too loud on what is called the doctrine, nor that the doctrine can be faithfully preached without preaching christian experience, for all christians have experienced the doctrine of God our Savior, and desire to adorn that doctrine in their deportment and conversation.

We are astonished at the figure brother Strickland has employed to illustrate his views of the nature and tendency of doctrinal preaching. Is it true that the constant and persistent preaching of the doctrine of Christ, with now and then an exposure of Arminianism, stamps the life out of real christians, like the stamping the roots of young trees, as in the similitude used? We do believe that the faithful preaching of the doctrine of Christ will drive away from the church those who have never received the love of the truth, that they might be saved, but we are willing to see all that fire put out which God has not kindled, all those converts driven away from the church which God has not made, and all that life which is not born of God slain by the sword of the Spirit. Let them all die who cannot live on every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God; let them all starve who cannot feed upon the doctrine of Christ, and let them all be stripped of their foliage and fruit whose roots can be killed by the faithful preaching of the doctrine of the gospel. “For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorra: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.” (Deut. 32:32,33) Of this sort were those “disciples” who figured zealously at the banquet of loaves and fishes. (John 6) But the vigor was bruised out of their roots on the very next day, by the doctrine which kills so many at this day. When Jesus preached to them the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, that none could be saved except by him, that none could have eternal life except they ate his flesh and drank his blood, etc., this doctrine made a great scattering of the disciples. No doubt if our Lord had kept back this hard doctrine, and in its stead given them such food as they could relish, a

few more loaves and fishes, they would have been inclined to remain with him, and to have had him for their King. But the bread of heaven they did not desire, and his doctrine they could not endure; it pinched their roots beyond endurance, because they were not rooted or grounded in him, and we read, “Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” (John 6:60,66) “Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Here we see that the very doctrine which crushes the roots and drives away nominal and graceless disciples, feeds, comforts, unites and binds more closely together those who are truly born of God and led by his Spirit. Those churches therefore which have withered and died because the doctrine has been preached to them long and loud, and Arminianism exposed, we are sure were not the churches of Christ, and they cannot die too fast when the truth of God kills them. “ Doctrine is good in its place.” So brother Strickland admits, but where is its place? In the church of God. The holy apostle has warned us, saying, “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” (II John 10) This admonition is to the elect lady and her children, whom John loved in the truth, and certainly is applicable to all who know and love the truth. Paul was so far from apprehending danger to the saints that he exhorted Timothy to “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” Too much of this would not kill them, nor destroy their spiritual exercises. God says by the mouth of Moses, “Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass.” (Deut. 32:1,2) Nothing crushing or violent to the plants which God’s own hand hath set, in his doctrine. Even the tender herb, instead of being crushed by it, is refreshed; it comes like the small rain, and distills like the cheering dew, softly descending, with wholesome effect, causing the tenderest plants to sparkle in living vigor and beauty. To those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, the doctrine of Christ is in its appropriate place, but to anti-Christ it has no attraction; to all false professors of religion it would be like “a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout.” (Prov. 11:22) As brother Strickland justly remarks, “It must underlie all the experience and practice of the gospel.” Nothing therefore can be regarded as gospel experience or gospel practice that is contrary to or that cannot endure sound doctrine. But our brother seems to think it useless to harp upon it where it is already well understood. The apostle dwelt largely on those things, not because the saints did not know them, but because they did know them, and Peter desired, as long as he should continue in the flesh, to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance.

Those who possess genuine faith will show it by their works, and where it is not so manifested we have no reliable evidence of its existence. “We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.” (II Cor. 4:13; Psalms 116:10) Those who believe that the preaching of the truth is for the edifying of the saints will be expected to advocate that kind of preaching, and those who think an exhibition of the doctrine will be detrimental to the cause, and depressing to the spiritual exercises of the saints, will be apt to show their faith by keeping it back.

Brother Strickland inquires, “What good is faith going to do you or me, unless that faith is coupled with good works?” We reply, That faith which is the fruit of the Spirit never fails to work, for it works by love and purifies the heart, and any other kind of faith will be vain, even if it be coupled with what we may call good works, for without faith it is impossible to please God. We do not disagree in regard to the character of those works of which brother Strickland speaks, and we believe that the faith of the

Son of God living and reigning in us will be evinced by a careful practice of them all. We may differ in regard to the manner in which the saints are to wash each other's feet. According to our understanding of it, we are now trying to wash brother Strickland's feet, and we presume that he designed to cleanse our feet of some dust by his brotherly letter, to which we are now replying. If we diverge from the pathway of holiness we shall defile our feet, if not our garments, but we shall keep our feet when we stand on holy or consecrated ground.

Having occupied so much space in our remarks on brother Strickland's letter, and our replies to his interrogatives, we will now attend to his request for our views on 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."

The saints to whom this apostolic admonition is addressed, we are told in the first verse, had already obtained faith of the like precious kind, as that possessed by Peter himself. It was not therefore a faith in prospect and to be procured, nor a faith that had originated with themselves, but it is that faith which is the gift of God, is born of God, and is the faith of the Son, and which overcomes the world. It is precious from its intrinsic value, from its nature and effects, from its power to conquer the world, quench the violence of fire, stop the mouths of lions, and give ability to endure all things, as seeing him who is invisible. It is peculiarly precious, because it can only come from God as a special gift, and because without it no man can please God; and it is also precious because it is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; and precious because to it all divine revelation is made to the saints of their election, calling, justification before God, deliverance from wrath and assurance of immortality beyond the grave. With this priceless treasure the apostle assures the saints that God has given them all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. By this precious faith, together with all things pertaining to life and godliness, which things are all grasped, apprehended or received by precious faith, and by them are given (that is, dealt out to us from our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Reservoir of all spiritual blessings), to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these (that is, by faith, and what faith lays hold on), ye might be partakers of the divine nature. It is not by this faith and all things that pertain to life and godliness, that we are or were made partakers of human or earthly nature, but of that spiritual, immortal and eternal life, which constitutes our new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. We cannot possess this precious faith without possessing Christ, for it is in him, and as Paul says, "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." By this faith and these attendant graces the saints have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, or through the depraved propensities of our earthly nature, being by the blood of Christ purged from our old sins. Now with all this grace, not only in store for us, but given and received, obtained and in possession, we are called to be active. God has bestowed all these spiritual blessings on us in Christ, "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." God has called us to glory and virtue. "Wherefore [for these reasons, this being the case, and this grace being received,] the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Instead of this precious faith, and with it all things pertaining to life and godliness, and all the many great and precious promises, and even a participation in the divine nature, having a tendency to make us negligent, careless or indifferent in regard to our high and holy calling, every principle of this heavenly and divine nature implanted is *rather* calculated to make us diligent in the pursuit of the things which become sound doctrine. The child of God thus called and invested with these precious gifts is to regard it as the great business of his life to diligently pursue those things which are in our context enjoined. Not

thereby to procure his election, or any or all the things which pertain to life and godliness, for these he has already in possession, but that he may thereby demonstrate for his own spiritual comfort and for the declarative glory of God, that he does already possess them. This makes *sure* their calling, that is, it proves beyond all contradiction that God has already called them to glory and to virtue; and as it proves that they are called, so it proves that they are chosen or elected children of God, for “Whom he did predestinate, them he also called.” To make our calling and election sure, is not to procure either, for they are already complete, but it manifest and demonstrate the existing fact. “For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” Do what things? The things which he had mentioned in the preceding verse. “Add to your faith virtue.” Virtue is the opposite of vice, and God has called the saints to virtue, that they may show forth the praise of him that hath called them. All the amiability of our nature, in the absence of faith, could not please God, or make our calling and election sure. Faith is first, and virtue, which is in harmony with precious faith, is to be added as evidence to ourselves, and to those around us, that we possess the faith of God’s elect. A man may hold a creed which for orthodoxy may be unexceptionable, and he may preach long and loud in defense of it, but if he be not virtuous in his conduct and deportment he only holds the truth in unrighteousness. And again, a man may be a subject of grace, and possess true and genuine faith, yet if he be not virtuous, circumspect and upright in his deportment, he becomes a castaway, so far as relates to the proving of his calling and election, and a castaway as to his usefulness in his high and holy vocation.

“And to virtue knowledge.” We are not to conclude that we know enough, and that there is no more for us to learn in the school of Christ. We are to learn of Jesus, search the Scriptures, prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. Ask counsel of God, watch carefully the leadings of his word and Spirit, and follow those things whereby one may edify another. This knowledge of divine things is to be diligently sought after, that it may be added to our faith and virtue. But if we have not the faith and virtue we may be ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

“And to knowledge temperance.” If we have not faith, virtue and knowledge, we shall not know what is temperance, but having the former we are qualified to add to them the latter, and to be temperate in all things.

“And to temperance patience.” A restless, murmuring, fretful course illy benefits one who should show forth the praise of the Redeemer. To be patient in tribulation, under sore trials, afflictions, temptations and persecutions, greatly adorns the life of the christian, and this blessed ornament of our profession should be added to the others.

“And to patience godliness.” Godliness consists in living in the fear of God, denying ourselves all ungodliness, that we may live soberly, righteously and godly in the world. To live godly is to pursue in all things that course which God has approved in his word, and which Christ has taught in his examples.

“And to godliness brotherly kindness.” We cannot attach too much importance to these things. “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” But how do we know it if we do not love the brethren? Brotherly kindness is an important evidence then of our calling and election.

“And to brotherly kindness charity,” or christian love, which is to manifest our attachment to God, to his cause, his doctrine, his ordinances, his people, and to all his laws and institutions.

“For if these things be in you, and abound.” That is, if precious faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, if these things be in us and abound, that is, if they be

acted out, made manifest in all our walk and conversation, we cannot be barren or unfruitful, for these are the fruits of the Spirit, and give testimony that the tree which bears them has been made good, and hence they demonstrate that our calling and election is of God, and therefore sure.

“If ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” Never fall from your steadfastness in the truth, from the evidence that you have been purged from your old sins; you shall never fall into that darkness of mind and blindness in which you cannot see afar off, and in which you forget that you have been purged, washed, cleansed, sanctified and set apart from the world to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. When all these things are abounding in us we feel a blessed assurance that we are born of God, a joyful reliance on the great and precious promises which are given unto us.

The apostle adds, “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” In the absence of these aboundings we feel barren and unfruitful, and find it hard to enter into the precious privileges of the kingdom, and we sometimes doubt whether we have any right or inheritance there; but when they abound in us we do sweetly and experimentally enter in through the gates into the city of our God; and the entrance is ministered unto us abundantly by the Spirit, in our spiritual exercises of mind, in our enjoyment of our gospel privileges, and by the brethren and kindred in Christ, who soon discover the evidence that these things are truly in us and abound, and our entrance into their hearts, their confidence, their love and their fellowship is most abundant.

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 1, 1862.

THOUGHTS OF PEACE IN TIME OF WAR

“My kingdom is not of this world,” saith the Redeemer. How striking the contrast! While the kingdoms, nations, and States into which human governments are divided are all subject to changes, to invasions, and to decay, the kingdom of our Lord is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion shall have no end. None can successfully invade it for, “Except a man be born of the water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And while earthly governments may be involved in war, as ours is at this painful moment, and destroy one another, of the increase of Christ’s government and peace there shall be no end, and of the subjects of his kingdom it shall ever be said, “Behold, how they love one another!” Should it not then be the great aim, in such a time as this, of every child of God to make this striking contrast appear by loving one another with a pure heart? While the children of this world indulge their thirst for marshal fame, and light the torch of war, the true disciple of the meek and lowly lamb of God has a higher, holier, and more heavenly sphere to fill. It is his duty to do good, as much as in him lieth, unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith. Their calling is to love one another with a pure heart fervently, and instead of attempting to avenge themselves for imaginary or real injuries, to remember that God has said to them, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay. Leave the adjustment to him who can be swayed by no unholy or impure influences, and commit the keeping of their souls to him as unto a faithful Creator. As by fatigue and labor we are qualified to appreciate rest, and as abstinence and hunger prepares us to realize the sweetness of wholesome food,

so the turmoil and strife in which we are involved is calculated to make the christian sigh for home. The wicked are like the troubled sea that can not rest, but great peace have they that love the Savior's law, and nothing shall offend them. The world has little else for them than tribulation.

“Through tribulation deep,
The way to glory is.

But they shall come up at last out of great tribulation with garments washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Their light afflictions, which are momentary, shall work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while they look not on the things which are temporal but on the things which are eternal. Our afflictions for the present are not joyous but grievous; but,

“Though painful at present,
Shall cease before long;
And then, O! how pleasant,
The conqueror's song!”

We look forward for peace, nor shall we look in vain. It is already provided, it is already solemnly pledged, yea, it is already given. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27) Of this peace all the saints are made to partake while here below, but what we have is but an earnest of what God has in store for all who love him. The apostolic salutation to the saints is, “Peace be multiplied.” We need more than we at present enjoy; but what we have God will multiply until it shall rise, and as a redundant river flow, and come to us as the waves of the sea. This peace, the apostle tells us, is from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ: it is, therefore pure and heavenly, and such as the world can neither give nor take away.

How refreshing in these times of tribulation to contemplate that in the midst of dire calamities, dissolving nations, crumbling thrones, melting elements, and conflagrated worlds, that “The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” (Isaiah 32:17) How sweet to enjoy the measure of this peace which is allotted us while here in the flesh, how unspeakably blessed to die in its enjoyment! to close our eyes on all the vanities and vexations of earth, in peace with God, and in peace with all mankind, to go hence to reign in glory with him who is our Peace, and who is the Prince thereof!

“Discord and strife are banished thence,
Distrust and slavish fear –
No more we hear the pensive sigh,
Or see the falling tear.
There sweeps no desolating winds
Across that calm serene abode;
The wanderer there a home shall find
Within the paradise of God.”

It is neither our province nor desire, either as the conductor of this paper, or as a minister of the Lord Jesus, to sit in judgment, to justify or condemn the actions of those who are set in authority over us in the political affairs of our great Commonwealth; for we cannot be disloyal to the powers that be, without resisting an ordinance of God. For our apostle directed Titus to “Put them (the saints) in mind to be subject to principalities, and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work: To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.” (Titus 3:1,2)

Also he has said, "Let every soul be subject to the higher power: for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." (Romans 13:1-7) Observe, this admonition is to all the saints, in all the relations they sustain in the flesh with their fellow beings, servants to their masters in the flesh, children to parents, wives to their husbands, and subjects to their Governments, including every soul, each to be in subjection to the higher power; for these higher powers are ordained of God, and are all subject to his power, and are used by him in the administration of his providential government of every soul. Hence we cannot disregard any of these obligations without disloyalty to God, whose ministers they are. When he uses these, his ministers, for the administration of peace and protection to his saints and for the security of their rights and privileges, let us rejoice and be glad; and if by them it be his pleasure to minister judgments and wrath, let us be still and know that he is God, and that he has ordained that all things shall work together for good to them that love him. He will himself shield and protect his saints, in all their trials and distresses: for,

"God is the refuge of his saints,
When storms of sharp distress invade;
Ere we can offer our complaints,
Behold him present with his aid.

Let mountains from their seats be hurl'd
Down to the deep and buried there –
Convulsions shake the solid world,
Our faith shall never yield to fear.

Loud may the troubled ocean roar,
In sacred peace our souls abide,
While every nation, every shore,
Trembles and dreads the swelling tide."

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 15, 1862.

ISAIAH 4:1

Brother Beebe: – Please give your views on Isaiah 4:1: "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Who do the women and the man represent, and

what is meant by being called by his name to take away their reproach? I have been a reader of the *Signs of the Times* for a number of years, and this is the first time I have asked for your views on any subject. Please reply soon, and oblige.

I.M.

Halcoti Centre, N. Y.

REPLY

We presume this passage and its connection had a primary reference to the judgments of the Lord which were at the time of this prophecy impending over Jerusalem, and Judah, in the execution of which Jerusalem was besieged and taken, and the king and subjects went into the seventy years captivity, according to the word of the Lord. The condition to which they were, as a people, literally reduced by various conflicts with opposing powers, in which their armies had been defeated, and their male population thinned out, seems to be indicated by the anxiety of their women to escape from the reproach which by popular sentiment then prevailing, attached to widowhood and single life. But the prophetic application of the text, when considered in connection with the following part of the chapter, evidently looked forward to the time when the rod should come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and The Branch should grow up out of his roots, Isaiah 11:1 compared with Zechariah 6:12,13, "Behold the man whose name is The Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the Temple of the Lord," etc., as having reference to the coming of the Messiah, the setting up of his kingdom, the rejection of the Jewish nation and final destruction of Jerusalem. "And in that day." The day in which the righteous judgments of God should be exhausted upon the Jews is often referred to in the scriptures as the great and terrible day of the Lord – as the day that shall burn as an oven, when the proud and the wicked shall be stubble to be consumed – as the day in which the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish, and worship the Lord in his holy mount at Jerusalem. It is a period spoken of not only as the year of God's redeemed, but also as the day of his vengeance. This day, as we understand it, signifies the gospel dispensation, which should utterly supersede the Jewish. It was to be ushered in by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, and extend throughout all time. Within the limits of that day, the predictions of our text should be realized. "Seven women should take hold of one man." Harlot women, in many of the figures used in the scriptures, mean false or anti-christian religious organizations. As soon as the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ became measurably relieved from the violent persecution which marked the pages of its early history, and some of the potentates of the earth, from sinister motives, professed to endorse and defend it; thousands who had before been its bitterest persecutors, sought to wipe away their reproach by an assumption of the christian name. It became unpopular and degrading to be longer known in their true characters, as pagans, or Jews, Mohammedans, or infidels, and from that cause they sought the cover of the christian name. In this disguise the man of sin, the son of perdition, was to be revealed, whose coming, as we are informed, should be after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness, with all signs and lying wonders. The old mother, and her household of harlot daughters, showing by the number *seven* a full and complete brood, would not like to bear the reproach of their real character, but like their mother, claim to be queens, and no widows, they desired to be known as the bride, the Lamb's wife, and to be called by his name. But while all the anti-christian progeny of Mystery Babylon the Great have evinced their ardent desire to be called by the name of Christ, they have uniformly proposed to stipulate that the privilege they desire shall not be by grace, but conditional, as shown by their proposition: "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel." In other words, the Lord should do his part, and they will do their part of the contract. The Lord's part shall be to shield them from their reproach, by lending the sanction of his name, and they would engage to support themselves, so as to be no expense to him. As for eating

his bread, they have no appetite or relish for it. His bread is spiritual, and they being carnal, cannot eat of it, and the apparel in which he clothes his bride is composed of the garments of salvation and the robe of his righteousness. In neither of these have they any desire to appear. Hence, instead of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, or living by faith upon him, they prefer to eat their own earnings, feasting on their own works, and having all the religion they live for, and instead of wearing the garments of his salvation, they choose to be clothed in their own filthy rags, the fig-leaf patch-work of their own industry. Harlots, in the scriptures, are represented as being passionately fond of gaudy show, and to be so dressed as to attract the licentious gaze of those for whom they lie in wait to deceive. Unto the bride of Christ it is granted that she shall be clothed in linen, clean and white; for the white linen is the righteousness of saints. None but the redeemed of the Lord can wear, or even desire to wear, this spotless robe. It is granted to none but the bride, the Lamb's wife; it will fit none other, nor do or can others appreciate it. Its fashion, its texture, its appearance in all respects, are suited to the church of God.

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 15, 1862.

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:7

Dear Brother Beebe: – I value the *Signs of the Times* very highly, as a medium through which to hear from the scattered flock of our Shepherd. I do not know how to do without them: they contain all the preaching I receive that can feed my soul. Although I live near Rockford where there are almost all kinds of religious societies, but as yet I have not met one who can sympathize with me. I feel like one alone, and a stranger. But when I read the *Signs of the Times* I find that there are some in the same condition. I read of many brethren and sisters in Illinois, but none near to me. If I do not intrude on your time too much, please give me your views, through the *Signs of the Times*, on Song 1:7. May the Lord be with and sustain you in all your trials is the prayer of your unworthy sister in the Lord.

Jane Sohner

REPLY

The text proposed is,

“Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?” We have understood the Song of Solomon to portray the Lord Jesus Christ and his church, setting forth, in lively figures, the relationship subsisting between them; the love, union, communion and correspondence of the parties, showing the faithful care and tender and unremitting watchfulness of Christ for his people, and the spiritual exercises of the church, as deriving all her happiness and security from him. While the language of the Song generally is peculiarly appropriate in its application to the church, it also clearly expresses much of the experience of the saints individually. The petitioner in our text is evidently one who loves most devotedly the person to whom she makes her urgent appeal, and that too with an undivided love. “*O thou whom my soul loveth.*” Not one among other dear or cherished objects, all

other loves are lost sight of, the only centre of affection and attraction appears, is recognized, confessed, admired .and appealed to. So the church of God finds in Jesus Christ the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely one; and can and does distinguish and identify him as the one whom her soul loveth; and the one for whom she has renounced all other loves.

So much is every quickened sinner in love with the Lord Jesus Christ they can only feel happy in his presence. In his presence there is fullness of joy to them, and at his right hand there are pleasures forever more. There can be no reasonable doubt that this language is intended to set forth the love of the church and all her members to him that hath loved them and given himself for them. This love is peculiar, it differs from all other loves. It is spiritual, it came from God, it is constant, for it is immutable, and cannot change its object. It is stronger than death, and lasting as eternity. It is discriminating, transforming, transporting, and well may the apostle exclaim, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God.” But let us remember that all on whom God has graciously bestowed it are called on to manifest their love to Christ by doing what he has commanded them. Those who really possess this love will feel its constraining power drawing them to Christ, with the same petition of the spouse in our text. “*Tell me.*” She feels her own deficiency of knowledge, but God has taught her to look for instruction. She goes not through the labyrinths of human speculation to gain the instruction so greatly desired, for she is satisfied that in him whom her soul loveth are hid all the treasures of knowledge, and wisdom, and in him all fullness dwells; and hence her appeal is made directly to him. Those who only profess to love Christ, whose works prove the insincerity of their love, will consult the wise and prudent of this world in regard to the subject of her inquiry, but who but Christ can instruct the quickened subjects of his grace, where he feedeth, or where he maketh his flock to rest at noon. Every christian should know there is safety in no instructions that do not come from him. He says, “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest to your souls.” Well, this is just what the Spouse is enquiring after. Hungry and starving for wholesome food, such food as he alone can minister, she enquires where he feeds his flock. Weary and heavy laden, she desires, above all things, to know where he makes his flock to rest. As it was said to Eve, “And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” So the desire of the bride, the Lamb’s wife, shall be to Christ, her husband, and he shall rule over her. The desire of every saint is to Christ, and they will not dishonor him by leaning upon the arm of another. Why should she be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of his companions? There are many flocks which he does not feed, and flocks which do not enter into his rest. But why should those who love the Lord Jesus, and who regard him as the only object of their delight, turn aside to any of the flocks of which Jesus is not the Shepherd? Can any good reason be given for so turning aside? Certainly not. We can not think favorably of the religious profession of those who can be satisfied with any other than the flock of Jesus, unto whom it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom. This is a matter in which those who truly love Christ are unwilling to be deceived or misled. But while they distrust all other teachers, they know that Him whom their souls love will not misdirect them. “When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them.” He does not merely point out the course, but he gives the *example*, he marks the way with his own foot prints, and says, “Follow me.” He goes before them, and his sheep follow him; but a stranger will they not follow; for they know not the voice of strangers.” He says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hands.” Observe, the enquiry of the Spouse is not, Tell me where I can feed myself – where I can procure food, but, Tell where thou feedest? He is himself both the food and the feeder.

“His dearest flesh he makes my food,
And bids me drink his richest blood.”

Except we eat his flesh and drink his blood, we have no vitality in us. The immortal life which he gives to his sheep must live on him, for himself is their life, and he is the true bread which came down from heaven. This he gives all those whom he feeds. But the enquiry is *Where*, as well as *What*, he feeds. The Spouse seems sensible that the place is not by the flocks of his companions, but it must be where he feeds. He responds graciously to her enquiry, “If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds’ tents.” The footsteps of the flock of Christ is *thy way*, there is no other course to be laid out. That is thy way, and it is the only way, it is the way of holiness, it is the King’s highway, and all other ways are delusive and wrong, and although they may seem right to a man, the end thereof is death. From the days of John the Baptist all who constitute the organized flock or gospel church of Christ have walked in the footsteps of Christ, in the ordinance of baptism, and through that ordinance they have come into christian fellowship, and the legitimate residents of that house, which Christ has desired for an habitation, and where he has assured us he will dwell forever; and where he has promised to abundantly bless the provisions, and fill his poor with bread. There is but the one entrance to this house, or fold. He that climbeth up some other way is a thief, and a robber; he comes only to steal, and to kill, and to devour. Therefore, “Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock” of the Redeemer, and the pathway shall lead thee to the place where Jesus feeds his flock, like a Shepherd, where he gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom. There, too, at noon, when the sun pours forth its brightest refulgence, and its more scorching rays, he maketh his flock to rest. This the Psalmist witnessed in Psalm 23; “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name sake.” “For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:17)

“The footsteps of thy flock I see.
Thy sweetest pasture here they be:
A wondrous feast thy love provides,
And at the feast thyself presides.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 15, 1862.

LUKE 24:26

Brother Beebe: – I wish you would write a discourse on the last chapter of Luke, twenty-sixth verse: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?”

A.R. Dorris,
Webster Co., KY., August 1, 1862.

REPLY

Saints and angels may well be amazed at the idea of the blessed Christ of God appearing in the character of a sufferer, and it is not surprising that the two disciples with whom he was conversing when he uttered the words above written, recoiled at the thought that wicked men had been permitted to crucify their Lord and Master. Like all others of the disciples, they could only understand the profound mystery so far as it was opened by revelation to their comprehension. They knew that they had loved him dearly, that they had trusted in him as the Messiah that was to come, and they verily believed that he was the long looked for Deliverer that was to redeem Israel, but how much he was to suffer in the accomplishment of that work they did not realize. They had witnessed his arrest, his trial and his conviction, they had probably followed, perhaps afar off, to the place of execution, saw his writhing agony on the cross, heard his bitter groans, and heard him cry, “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” Ah, well they knew that he was crucified, dead and buried, but that he was indeed risen again from the dead they did not know. True they had been astonished at a report of some women who were early at the sepulcher, who averred that he had risen, but how could they rejoice in a risen Jesus until as such he manifested himself to them? So it still continues to be with the disciples of Jesus, for now we know only in part, we see only as through a glass darkly, but the blessed prospect looms up before us, that as soon as that which is in part shall be done away, we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known.

But our brother desires us to discourse on the text: “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?” We do not understand the Redeemer to call his disciples fools by way of reproach, or as implying impatience with their infirmities, but to chide their despondency and dispel their doubtings. A fool is simply a person who is destitute of understanding, and this was their case on that occasion, for if they had comprehended the matter, if they had known that thus it behooved him to suffer and to rise again from the dead on the third day, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to Jews and Gentiles, and that this dreadful suffering was now accomplished, that sin and death and hell were vanquished, that the church of God was now redeemed from all iniquity, that now his mediatorial glory was about to break forth in heavenly radiance, instead of desponding they would have rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“And slow of heart to believe.” The apostle says, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” That is, in regard to spiritual things. Carnal or nominal professors of religion may believe their respective creeds with their heads, with their carnal minds and with their natural powers, as evidence is presented, and they may be quick to believe, for they are under no restraint. We see them eager to drink in delusion that suits their carnal lust, and hurriedly they embrace the doctrine of men, because they love it, and because it requires no grace, no teaching of the Holy Spirit to instruct them; but the children of God can only lay hold of the evidences on which their belief in Christ is predicated, by faith, and their faith is not of themselves, it is the gift of God. And it is the work of the Spirit of truth to present the evidences of eternal things to their faith, and they are such fools they can only believe and understand what they are taught of God by his Spirit, for they have not a particle of wit or wisdom, only what is treasured up for them in him who of God is made unto them wisdom, for in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. They feel and confess that they are slow to believe all that the prophets have written. They were not without confidence in the prophets of the Lord, and undoubtedly believed some of the things which the prophets had written, but they were slow or tardy in believing all. We do not suppose the two disciples disbelieved or doubted what the prophets had written in predicting the coming of One who should redeem Israel, for they referred to that promise, as one

bound to their hearts, and although they might confidently believe many things thus written in the Old Testament, their understanding of the Scriptures was so limited that they were slow to believe it all. But what the prophets have written is one undivided and unbroken testimony, beautiful and glorious in its harmony and identity; hence Jesus, fully understanding their deficiency, applied the proper and only corrective. He began at Moses, that is, with the five books of Moses, with which the Old Testament begins, and beginning also with all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. So we perceive, fools though these dear disciples were, as also all his disciples still are, (for if any man would know anything he must first become a fool, that he may be wise,) yet they lacked no wisdom or knowledge that Jesus did not possess. When we consider the amount of instruction contained in the discourse of Jesus, embracing all that Moses and the prophets had written concerning himself, together with all that was contained in the other Scriptures on the same subject, all comprised in his discourse to them, is it any wonder that their hearts were inflamed, and burned in them, while he talked with them by the way, and opened to them the Scriptures? These Scriptures had not only predicted his advent to the world, but they had also testified before hand his sufferings, and the glory that should follow. The prophets themselves did not understand all the glory of their prophecy; there were some things sealed up from their understanding, as Peter says, They sought diligently “what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

We come now to the appeal which Christ made to the disciples: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?” On no such grounds as could justify Pilate in passing the sentence of death upon him, for he had acknowledged that he found no cause of death in him, nor ought he to have suffered in any sense that could justify the Jews and Romans to conspire against him. He was holy, harmless and separate from sinners; he had done no injury to any man, but to the contrary, he had healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf; he had fed the hungry, and ministered comfort to the afflicted; he had raised the dead, and cast out devils. Was there anything in this to justify their malice? He had invaded no rights claimed by earthly monarchs or potentates, he had paid tribute and custom according to their laws, and taught his disciples to imitate his example. Then why ought he to suffer these things? His enemies watched him diligently, and constantly lay in wait to find some cause of complaint that they might accuse him, but all in vain, for it cost them large sums of money to suborn witnesses to testify falsely against him, that they might procure his arrest. But although he was holy, innocent and pure, though there was no guile found in his mouth, although the eternal Father from the skies had proclaimed that he was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, still we are, from Christ’s own words, assured that there was necessity for him to suffer these things, for in the forty-sixth and forty-seventh verses of the same chapter he 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.” As it was written thus in the Scriptures, and the Scriptures containing the important record were written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, it is very evident that the grounds on which it behooved Christ to suffer were to be found in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and that his being finally delivered up to these sufferings was in fulfillment of what God’s hand and counsel had before determined should be done. By a careful comparison of what was written aforetime, with the testimony of the New Testament, and the record of the fulfillment of what was written, we learn that the necessity of Christ’s sufferings was indispensable for the redemption and salvation of his people. In pursuance of the purpose and grace of God, which he purposed in himself before the world began, Christ was set up, or given to be the Head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Such was the

relationship between Christ, in his mediatorial Headship over his body, the church, that all demands of the law and justice of God upon the church were assumed by him, and it was upon this, and on no other ground that we can conceive of, that it behooved him to suffer these things. That people whom the Father gave him, in their earthly nature have all sinned, and were all by nature children of wrath, even as others. But God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with him. Thus we perceive that the astonishing display of mercy and grace in the redemption of his people proceeded from the great love wherewith God had loved them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and that love was so great, so strong and so immutable, that our apostasy in Adam and our being dead in sins did not change or abate it. For God hath commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Truly this love is stronger than death, but in contemplating the unavoidable necessity of Christ's sufferings we must take into consideration the principles of law and justice which were involved, for in this lies much of the mystery of our salvation, how God could be just and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. No mortal wisdom could suggest a plan that would secure the salvation of sinners, without infringing the justice of God. The law would not admit of the substitution of an innocent sufferer for the transgressions of the guilty, unless there was some just and righteous ground of responsibility involved on the part of the sufferer. Husbands are in law responsible for the debts contracted by their wives, parents for children, etc., but in criminal cases these relations will not hold the innocent responsible, there must then be found a relationship still nearer; we know of no law that will exempt the head from responsibility for the acts of the body, or members of the body. On this principle then we conclude the law could justly look to Christ as Head and Surety for his body, the church, and certain it is that "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, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." The foregoing testimony from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah illustrates the subject better than volumes of uninspired comments, showing upon what principle it was just for the dear Redeemer to suffer, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. As the Shepherd he laid down his life for his sheep; for as they were his sheep before they had transgressed, justice demanded the ransom at his hands. He so stood related to and identified with his flock, that all their sins were laid on him, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and the extent of his atonement is forever settled. "For the transgression of my people [saith God] was he stricken." And by his stripes we are healed. The ground then on which he "ought to suffer," was not that we as transgressors had any claim on him for anything good or bad that we had done, or intended to do, but it was as these Scriptures clearly show, by the grace of God, and not the

will or works of men, that he tasted death for God's people; himself bearing our sins in his own body. Thus it behooved or became Christ to suffer. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10:14) His sufferings were indispensable, not only for bringing many sons unto glory, but also to prepare his entrance into the glory that was to follow. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

We presume the glory into which Christ was to enter was the glory of his mediatorial triumph over death, hell and sin, in the perfect redemption of his people, the organization of his kingdom, the ascension to his throne in Zion, and that revenue of praise which must redound to his great name to everlasting. It is true he had a glory with the Father before the world began, and as we understand, the glory of eternal deity was his in common with the Father, from everlasting, but his endurance of sufferings was not required to precede his possession of that glory. John says, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And the saints of every age have a revelation of this when God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. For he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. The glory of which he speaks in our text we conclude must be that of which he spake in his address to the Father, (John 17:22-24) the glory the Father gave him, and which he has given to his people. It must, we think, refer especially to his mediatorial glory, and that particularly which he has secured by the accomplishment of all the work which the Father gave him to do. The glorious triumph of the Son of God over all enemies, his endless victory over all opposing powers, was to be followed by his resurrection from the dead, his ascension up on high, his leading captivity captive, and the reception of his kingdom, his coronation and his throne, will all be comprised in that glory which he was to enter. Before the organization of his kingdom in her gospel beauty, the subjects required to be redeemed from their captivity, and their redemption could only be effected by his sufferings, hence we are told that he for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Thus in the majesty on high he has entered the glory which he had with the Father before the world began. While the things which he had to suffer intervened between him and the consummation of his glory, he was found in fashion as a man, took on him the form of a servant, learned obedience and was obedient even unto death. But the joy was then before him, and he passed through the depths of deep waters without faltering, and like Jacob, when serving Laban for Rachel, the anticipated bride, made the years of servitude seem as but a few days. So the blessed Savior anticipated the glory that was to follow his sufferings. High seated now upon his imperial throne, his people are not only redeemed from the curse and dominion of the law, and the lawful captives thus delivered, but the Spirit of immortality is sent down in his name to quicken and call all the trophies of his triumph, and his people are made willing in the day of his power. Vested now with all the power of heaven and earth, he gives repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins. Repentance and remission are now preached in his name, and his arm is made bare for salvation, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him and his work before him. He gathers now his sheep with his arm and carries them in his bosom, and they all know experimentally, when he opens the eyes of their understanding, what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to his mighty power.

In view of all this, ye trembling saints, as ye wade through the bitter waters of affliction, consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your mind. He

has laid up in heaven for you a crown of unfading glory, and you are called to know the fellowship of his sufferings and to be conformed to his death. Look steadfastly then to the mark of the prize of your high calling, and press on, your suffering days will soon be ended, your sighing and sorrowing soon shall cease, and God will wipe away all your tears. If it behooved Christ to suffer first and then to enter his glory, shall we complain of the sufferings of the present time, when so well we know that our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, do work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?

“His way was much harder and rougher than thine,
Did Christ your Lord suffer, and wilt thou repine?”

Middletown, N. Y.,
Sept. 1, 1862.

CROSSING JORDAN

Brother Beebe: – If it be not asking too much, please give your views, through the *Signs of the Times*, on the figurative import of Jordan, or rather of the children of Israel crossing that river. What I desire to know is whether it was designed to represent death. Your reply will greatly oblige one of the least of all saints, if a saint at all.

Elizabeth Conkle

REPLY

We do not think the crossing of Jordan by the children of Israel was designed to represent the departure of the children of God from this mortal to their immortal state, or from earth to heaven. When Christians leave these mortal shores they will bid farewell to all sinning, sorrowing, trouble and perplexity, and enter that haven of rest, peace and security, where the wicked shall cease to trouble them, and the weary shall be at rest. But such was not the case with the Hebrews when they passed over Jordan; their conflicts immediately commenced with the Canaanites, who disputed every inch of the ground with them. Nations were to be subdued and driven out before they could enjoy peace and quietude. And indeed, as long as they were to remain in that land they were told that the Canaanites should continue to be within their walls as an annoyance to them.

It is true that poets and commentators have frequently used the figure to represent the death of believers, probably because it was the end of the journey of the redeemed Israelites in the wilderness, and it was spoken of in distinction from Egypt and the wilderness of Mount Sinai, as a place of rest – a land flowing with milk and honey, and an inheritance given them in their father Abraham before any of them were born. But all these considerations cannot justify the application of Jordan to death, and Canaan to heaven so long as we find that Jordan did not terminate the conflicts, nor Canaan realize to them uninterrupted enjoyment. In Canaan, as well as in the wilderness, they were beset with temptations and invaded by enemies, and subjects of frequent and fearful chastisements from the hand of the Lord. This none of us look for in that world of unfading glory where the saints shall be perfectly

conformed to the image of their dear Redeemer, and forevermore employed in singing praise to God and the Lamb.

While dissenting from the views of others, it will be expected of us to give our views on the true application of the figure. The Hebrews in all their history we have regarded as a figure of the spiritual people of God. They were created and chosen in Abraham before any of them were brought into manifestation. As his seed, according to the flesh, they were figurative of a seed which was created in Christ, and identified with him in the economy of grace as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and a peculiar people, that should be counted to him for a generation. Abraham's seed were after the flesh, and were the type. Christ's seed were not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and they were the anti-type. This is no vain speculation, for the inspired apostle Paul has thus applied the figure, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The condition of the Hebrews in their early history, and in their captivity, and bondage in Egypt may represent the state and condition of God's chosen people in their fallen state of depravity, in bondage, and sold under sin. The redemption of the Israelites from the house of bondage when the Pascal Lamb was slain for them points clearly to the redemption of the children of God when Christ, our Passover, was slain. The toilsome pilgrimage of Israel in the wilderness where they received the fiery law not only shows that the law and the prophets were until John, or the Savior's advent, and the people of God were held under the Sinai Covenant until the baptism of John commenced in Jordan, but it also shows that the seed of Christ, whom he hath redeemed with his own blood, are in due time quickened and in their experience have to linger through a tedious and toilsome meandering in the wilderness of the law, and that when they emerge from their legal toils and wanderings in the wilderness, when Christ is revealed to them as their Spiritual Joshua, to lead them through Jordan into the promised possession, they then come to the anti-type of Jordan, which we understand to be the gospel ordinance of christian baptism. This ordinance divides between the wilderness state of God's people and their gospel church privileges, and the quickened child of grace, experimentally delivered from the curse and bondage of the law, enters the anti-type of Canaan the moment he is baptized, according to the law of Christ. In the gospel church we find the land flowing with milk and honey, and this is our spiritual inheritance secured to us in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the inheritance of Canaan was to Israel in Abraham. But in the gospel dispensation the spiritual Israelites have to encounter the Canaanites who oppose the whole ground with us. Like them, in the type, we are often brought into collision with strong and determined enemies, the world, the flesh, and Satan, doubts, fears, darkness, temptations, and a great fight of afflictions, which look much more like the condition that Israel was in on both sides of Jordan than anything which we are looking for after the dissolution of our mortal bodies. Some of the tribes went over Jordan and assisted in fighting the battles, and then returned and chose their inheritance on the other side: this could not be applied to those who have died and gone to heaven, as none have returned or chosen their inheritance in this life. But there are, no doubt, some who have experienced a work of grace in their hearts who are ready to buckle on their armor and fight valiantly for the truth when it is assailed, who, from some cause, to us unaccountable, have taken their stand on the opposite side of Jordan, or Christian baptism, from that occupied by the church.

Without designing any disrespect for the opinions of brethren who apply the figure differently from what we understand it, we submit what we have written as our view on the subject.

Middletown, N. Y.,
September 15, 1862.

SOLOMON'S SONG 3:7, 8

Dear Brother Beebe: – Some time ago I requested your view on Solomon's Song 3:7, 8, and I still desire you to give them, and oblige your friend,

William P. Robertson.

Gentryville, Ind., August, 1862.

REPLY

If we do not in all cases comply with the desires expressed by our brethren for our views on such passages of the Scriptures as they send us, it is not from any indifference felt by us in regard to their wishes, or from lack of inclination to oblige them. Sometimes it is for want of time to attend to so many calls as are made upon us, but more generally because we have no satisfactory light upon the subjects on which light is sought for.

The passage now proposed by Elder Robertson reads as follows: "Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night."

Solomon throughout this song very fitly personates our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom, as the son of David, king of Israel and builder of the temple, he was a brilliant type, and the spouse is quite as clearly a chosen and appropriate figure of the church of God, which is known as the bride, the Lamb's wife. In the text before us our attention is called to behold Solomon's bed. As Solomon himself is a figure, his bed must also be considered in a figurative sense, and is used to signify something of importance in regard to Christ, which is particularly interesting to the church of God. Beds are commonly regarded as places of rest and comfort for the weary, and are exceedingly useful in the night, when the feeble wayworn pilgrim or weary laborer can stretch himself upon it and enjoy a peaceful and refreshing slumber. But there were some peculiar excellencies in the bed which is Solomon's, which, especially to his love, his undefiled, could be found nowhere else. Solomon's bed was in a royal pavilion, possessing elegance and comfort suited to the high position of its august proprietor. It was a place of comfort as well as a place of rest, and in addition to these advantages, it was a place of safety, as we see it was guarded by valiant armed men.

All these figures, we think, are applicable to the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which gospel is the place of the sweetest rest that was ever enjoyed by the weary and the heavy laden, who have been permitted by abounding grace to recline upon its ample space for rest and comfort. The gospel is set forth by the apostle as a rest that remaineth to the people of God. It was figuratively set forth in the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh day from all the works which he had made, and blessed and hallowed that day. The seventh day Sabbath instituted under Moses, and all the Sabbatic days and years in the ceremonial law, were typical of the gospel as the rest for weary and heavy laden sinners who are called by grace. The inspired exposition of the subject in the New Testament, especially in the epistle to the Hebrews, thus explains their figurative import and design. Every weary and sin-burdened sinner that ever came to Christ is a witness that we which have believed do enter into rest, and that "He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." The prophet foresaw and proclaimed of Christ that his rest should be glorious. We think then that the royal bed of Solomon must refer to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only place of rest and comfort for those who can rest nowhere else. Taking this then as the correct design of the figure, let us notice this bed of Solomon's, namely, the gospel. First, we observe that it is Solomon's, or, as the figure implies, it is Christ's; it is the gospel of Christ, the gospel

of the Son of God. Paul speaks of some who preach another gospel, which is not another, etc., but he would admit of none as genuine but that gospel of Christ, of which he said he was not ashamed. Men may invent a multitude of schemes and theories to rest upon, but their beds are too short for one to stretch himself upon, and their covering is too narrow to wrap themselves in it. The strange woman in the seventh chapter of Proverbs boasted that she had decked her bed very extravagantly, and in a very costly manner, and perfumed it with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon, but with all the allurements of her harlot bed no weary sinner ever found either rest or comfort on it. Her house, we are told, is the way of hell, leading down to the chambers of death, and the prophet of the Lord proclaims in thunder tones that, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." No, it must be his bed.

"Behold his bed, which is Solomon's." The bed, or resting-place of Solomon, was the resting-place of his spouse. To her alone belonged the right and privilege of resting with her Beloved in all the pleasures of the consecrated couch. So in the glorious gospel of the grace of God none but the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall rest upon the gospel bed. His marriage bed is undefiled, no stranger ever has or shall be allowed to pollute it. There certainly is this peculiarity in the comforts of the gospel, none but the members of Christ can possibly rest in them; nor have they in reality any desire, for it is not calculated to be appreciated by them.

"The softest couch that nature knows
Can give the conscience no repose."

But the gospel gives rest and comfort to all who are allowed to enter into his rest, and this embraces the weary, to whom Christ says, "I will give you rest;" and the troubled saints, to whom Paul says, "To you who are troubled rest with us." Even the Christian can rest only on this bed, for the spouse says in the first verse of this chapter, "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not." It is a restless place for the children of God when they get upon their own bed, they cannot find him there who alone can calm their fears and cheer their hearts.

"And whilst upon my restless bed,
Among the shades I roll,
Till my Redeemer shows his head,
'Tis restless to my soul."

The perfect security of Solomon's bed is indicated by the royal guard of armed and valiant men which were stationed around it. It is true the gospel of Christ cannot be endangered by all the powers of earth and hell, but still the gospel church is now in a militant state, or in a state of warfare; hostile enemies have conspired to invade and spoil the resting-place of the church of God, and they sometimes succeed too well in terrifying the timid saints. Doubts, fears, unbelief and lack of confidence often cause the saints to tremble, and forbid their rest, but to protect the saints from these a royal guard is provided.

"Threescore valiant men." These may represent the gospel ministry, they are entrusted with the watch-care of the churches, and made overseers of the flock, and their business is to stand upon the watch-tower, and in the faithful discharge of their duties to meet every invading foe at the threshold, whether such foes approach in the form of men, or devils, or in doubts, fear or unbelief. Hence valiant men are required; those timid ones who leave the flock as soon as they see the wolf approaching are not reliable, for they are not of the valiant of Israel. The number, "threescore valiant men," makes a strong and sufficient guard; it is not to confine the number of the ministry to that number literally, but as in the figure, sixty men, well armed, would seem to be a very strong guard for one bed. So we infer that the gifts for the comfort and protection of the church from surprise or invasion is full and complete,

embracing the apostles and all who are called, equipped and placed for the defense of the gospel of Christ.

“They all hold swords.” They are prepared for the conflict, and ready to confront any approaching foe. Their swords are not made of steel to shed the blood of their opposers, for the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God in pulling down strong holds. The apostles understood the sword to be the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, as it comes from the mouth of God. John saw in his vision a sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of the mouth of him whose name was written upon his vesture and on his thigh, and whose name is called The Word of God. It is with this sword (namely) the words which God hath spoken, that apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers are to resist error, contend for truth, and with this two-edged sword, which cuts both ways, offensively and defensively, they are to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. “They all hold swords.” What would all their valor be to them when assailed if they could not meet the adversary with a “Thus saith the Lord”? They are all expert in war; God has taught their hands to war and their fingers to fight, as he did David and Paul. He makes them expert, for they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful; novices will not do, lest being lifted up with pride, they fall into the condemnation of the devil; not such watchmen as Isaiah described, which were dumb dogs, that could not bark, sleepy dogs, lying down, loving slumber, nor greedy dogs, that can never have enough. The wisdom of Solomon would be impugned by the supposition that he would entrust the security of his bed to an inefficient guard, and behold a greater than Solomon is in the church, to order all things in wisdom and righteousness.

“Every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night.” The sword of the warrior is usually fastened on his thigh, as the most appropriate and convenient place, ready to be drawn in an instant. He has not to go to some distant armory to procure a sword, every man on guard has one with him. The word is nigh thee, even in thine heart, and in thy mouth; even the word of faith which we preach. This is very essential, because of fear in the night. The night is the time when thieves and robbers and murderers are busy in pursuing their work; the night is the time for those who love darkness more than light, and it is in the darkness of the night the psalmist says all the beasts of the forest creep forth. It was in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, that Solomon saw the strange woman (Antichrist) sally forth on her errand of abomination. Naturally, men are more timid in the night than in the daytime, and it is truly so in a spiritual sense with christians; when the light of the countenance of the Redeemer is hidden from their view, dark, dismal thoughts and boding fears intrude, and then the valiant of Israel require to use their swords.

“Happy the church, that sacred place,
The seat of thy Creator’s grace;
Thy holy courts are his abode,
Thou earthly palace of our God.

Thy walls are strength, and at thy gates
A guard of heavenly warriors waits;
Nor shall thy deep foundations move,
Fixed on his counsel and his love.

Thy foes in vain designs engage,
Against his throne in vain they rage,
Like rising waves, with angry roar,
That dash and die upon the shore.”

Much more might be written on the subject, if we have not missed the true design of the figure. The subject is instructing, and full of comfort and interest to those who can find rest in the gospel; but none but quickened souls can be weary, therefore none other can truly appreciate rest. The dead can no more rest with the saints upon Solomon's bed than on the stormy billows of the troubled ocean; the gospel is the rest that remaineth, and shall evermore remain to the people of God; therefore we say:

“Go, ye that rest upon the law,
And toil and seek salvation there;
Look to the flame that Moses saw,
And shrink, and tremble, and despair.

But I'll retire beneath the cross,
Savior, at thy dear feet I'll lie,
And the keen sword that justice draws
Flaming and red, shall pass me by.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
Sept. 15, 1862.

JAMES 5:13

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.”

The spiritual tribes of the Lord, to whom this epistle was written, have the assurance that in the world they shall have tribulation, and be subject to afflictions, for God's people have always been characterized as a poor and an afflicted people, who trust in the Lord. Yet there are seasons when they are enabled to mount up with wings as eagles, and to rise above their pressing sorrows, when they are permitted to drink of the streams of that river which makes glad the city of our God – when they drink, and, for a season at least, do forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. The tide of their sufferings and of their rejoicings ebbs or flows as they endure the absence of sensible manifestations of the divine presence of their Lord, or are permitted to sit under his shadow with great delight, as his smiles create their purest joys, and when his smiles are withdrawn nothing can supply to them the lack. That this is, and always has been the case with the children of God in all ages past, the Scriptures fully testify; and that the same must be our lot while here below we have no reason to doubt; nor have we any just cause to desire that it should be otherwise, for although no affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, yet afterwards it works the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them who are exercised thereby. And we are assured by divine revelation that our light afflictions, which are for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not on the things that are seen, but on the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. We are, therefore, gainers ultimately, and even at the present they afford us reliable evidence that God dealeth with us as with children. But still, such is our weakness, we soon would faint under the weight and pressure of our afflictions if we were not sustained by the strong hand of our covenant God. Our impatient nature is prone to seek for sympathy in our afflictions from those around us who are subject to like passions, and it is soothing to our feelings to know that we

have kind friends who can feel for our woes, and offer words of consolation and comfort; but still we are not to rely on human, or even on christian sympathy, alone. Our great dependence is, and should be, on Him who is able to bear us up, and to sanctify all our tribulation to our good and his glory; therefore we have the direction embraced in the text, at the head of this article: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray." This is the peculiar privilege of the saints, of all who mourn in Zion, of any among you; and what a cheering consideration it is that we may come boldly to the throne of grace with our supplications, our prayers, our groanings, our tears, our burdens and complaints, with this warrant or order from the Lord, bidding us to bring them there, and leave them there, for we are instructed to cast all our cares on him, for he careth for us. As a good Shepherd careth for his flock, and as a father pitieth his own son that serveth him, so the Lord careth for his own elect who cry unto him day and night.

A feeling sense of our extreme poverty should not deter us, for although we have nothing in our hand to bring to our God as an offering, it is his throne of grace that we approach, and the poorer we feel the greater is the necessity of calling on him. If we were not poor, why should we ask for favors? The throne of grace is not accessible to the rich. The rich our God sends empty away, but he filleth the poor with good things. Nor should our darkness and doubtings deter us from approaching the mercy-seat, for our God assures us that they who fear him, though they walk in darkness and have no light, still it is said, "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." The mercy-seat is open and accessible to the saints, as well when involved in clouds and darkness, as when their skies are bright and clear; for God to them is a Refuge in distress and a very present help in trouble. He is not God afar off, but always at hand. He may be out of our sight, but his saints can never be obscured from his view. His ear is never heavy or dull that he cannot hear their crying. Hence the instruction, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."

But what is prayer? It must be something more than a form of words, for when the saints pray they are forbidden to use vain repetitions, as the hypocrites do. Nor are we to indulge the thought that we are to be heard for our much speaking. Prayer does not consist in the position of the body, nor any form of words, though they be ever so sound or orthodox. God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Without faith it is impossible to please God, and none but the spiritual, those who are born of the Spirit, possess that faith which is so indispensable to please God, for Paul says it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; it is a fruit of the Spirit, and it is the faith of the Son of God. Jesus Christ is himself both the Author and Finisher of it. Every one that is born of the Spirit does possess this principle of faith at all times, but it is not at all times sensibly felt by them, it being a purely spiritual principle in them; it is opposed by the flesh, and when the flesh predominates, when we walk after the flesh, that faith in us is obscured by clouds of doubt and unbelief which rise from the flesh, which is always at war with the Spirit. Then we grope along in the dark until we are delivered from the captivity of sin, which is in our members. Still that faith of the Son of God in us cannot die, for it is of God, and overcomes the world.

That faith which is born of God, according to I John 5:4, subsists on heavenly food, and will not rest long in us without its food from heaven. The saints cannot, therefore, remain long in darkness, or in captivity to the law of sin which is in our members, before there is a secret breathing desire for deliverance, a sighing after the liberty of the gospel, a groaning, being burdened, a crying out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This struggling after light and spiritual enjoyment is the action of faith which must finally triumph over the flesh, and overcome the world. It is the prayer of faith that is fervent and effectual.

Christians, therefore, often pray fervently and effectually when there is no outward form or ceremony discoverable, and perhaps pray most when they feel as though they cannot and do not pray at all. The Spirit of Christ, which is in them, maketh intercession according to the will of God, but it is often with groanings which we cannot clothe with words, for it cannot be uttered; but it is nevertheless prayer, and it is the prayer of faith, and it will assuredly be heard, and in due time answered. We may sometimes be sadly cheated by the deceitfulness of the flesh, and think we are praying fervently for certain things, when our desires are only those of the flesh, and not the groanings or breathings of the Spirit. Hence we ask and we receive not, because we ask amiss. It is a great mercy to us that our fleshly desires are not gratified, that the things which we ask for and which our carnal passions desire, are not granted, to be consumed on our fleshly lusts, which war against the Spirit, for they would only tend to strengthen the flesh, the more vigorously to maintain the warfare against the law of the Spirit of life. But the Spirit of life and immortality, which dwells in all who are born of the Spirit, searches all things, yea, the deep things of God, and knowing the mind of God, maketh intercession for us according to the will of God, and John says, “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” (I John 5:14,15) Those who are addressed by the apostle James in our text are all in possession of this Spirit, all being born of it, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, therefore he says, “Is any among you afflicted?” That is, if any one among the saints is afflicted, it is his peculiar and inestimable privilege to pray. None others have the ability to pray with the spirit and with the understanding, for they possess neither, and in their absence all their prayers are but the vain expressions of the prompting of the carnal mind, which cannot please God.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, and they are not only many, but various, but their afflictions rise not out of the ground, neither do they come by chance, for God hath, for wise and gracious purposes, chosen them in a furnace of affliction, because he knoweth that it is good for them to be afflicted, it seems to humble them, to teach them their dependence on God, and to make them remember the throne of grace. Having nowhere else to look for succor and support, and deeply sensible of their pressing necessities, they are constrained to enter into their closets, and to shut the door; their desire is unto the Lord, they desire seclusion from the world, and, if possible, from themselves, to enter the secret chambers, which are only known to the saints, and there –

“Into the bosom of their God
Pour out their long complaints.”

“Let him pray.” Our Father seeth in secret – he knows our feeble frame. He bows his ear and bids us come even unto his seat, to come boldly, notwithstanding our sense of vileness, of unworthiness; no frowning terror clothes his brow to fright the timid, trembling suppliant from his presence, but as a child coming to a loving parent, so the saints approach and draw nigh unto God by the new and living way, which he hath consecrated for them through the veil; that is, through the flesh of him who was made flesh and dwelt among us. None can come to the Father but by Christ, and none who come by him will ask God to change the purpose or counsel of his own will for their gratification, but rather will they pray that they may be reconciled in all things to the righteous will of God; and while they pray from the fullness of their hearts that God may forgive their trespasses, as they forgive all who have trespassed against them, they know that unless they have that forgiving spirit in them which from the heart forgives those who trespass against them, neither will their heavenly Father forgive them their trespasses.

At this present time the saints are passing through a great fight of afflictions; we have fallen on exciting times; wars are raging in our land, our sons are called into the tented fields,

“Where blood and carnage
Clothe the ground in crimson,
Sounding with death groans.”

Let all the afflicted saints then call mightily on the name of the Lord, as he affords us the spirit of grace and supplication, that he may support us under our present trials, and in his own good time and way restore peace and prosperity to our beloved country, and protect his dear children under the shadow of his wing, until the indignation be over past.

Ye saints of the most high God, pray without ceasing, and in all things give thanks unto God. And may the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Middletown, N. Y.,
October 1, 1862.

JEREMIAH 48:10

“Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.”

Jeremiah was the messenger of the Lord, sent with many fearful predictions of wrath upon the carnal and idolatrous Israelites, and also upon the nations round about them. In the connection of our text he delivers a message from the Lord against Moab, because Moab had trusted in his works, treasures, etc. As the Moabites were always adversaries to Israel, so those of subsequent ages who, like Moab, trust in their own works, treasures, means and instruments, are the adversaries of the spiritual tribes of our Lord, who contend that salvation is of the Lord alone.

These curses denounced, in our text, against those who do the work of the Lord deceitfully, and him that keepeth back his sword from blood, seem to have a special reference to the execution of the judgments of the Lord against Moab. We have an illustration in the account recorded of Balak, king of Moab, when he sent for Balaam to come and curse Israel for him, hoping that thereby he and his forces might be able to drive the Israelites out of the land. Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness, and being allured by the princely gifts which Balak proposed to bestow, and the great honors to which he was to exalt him, although solemnly pledged to utter only the words of the Lord, did nevertheless consult deceitfully with Balak to ensnare the Israelites, by laying a stumbling-block to cause them to sin. He did the work of the Lord deceitfully, for while acting as a prophet of the Lord, and charged by the angel of the Lord (see Numbers 25:26, etc.) he consulted with Balak to lay a stumbling-block to cause Israel to sin. Balaam’s love for the wages of unrighteousness undoubtedly induced him to do the work of the Lord deceitfully.

Jeremiah may have uttered the words of our text in justification of his own faithfulness in declaring the word of the Lord, and in showing the fearful responsibility resting on him, and on all who are called to proclaim the judgments of the Lord to Zion, or what God hath spoken of impending wrath which shall consume the adversaries of his cause and people.

We have a striking illustration of doing the work of the Lord deceitfully in the case of Saul, when he was sent to destroy Amalek. He was commanded to utterly destroy old and young, men and beasts. He had no discretionary power, for it was the work of the Lord; but instead of strictly obeying the word, he ventured to substitute his own judgment, and spared Agag, the king, and the best of the sheep and oxen, and then reported to Samuel that he had obeyed the commandment of the Lord. But Samuel replied, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul had a very pious and plausible excuse; he said, 'Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag, the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal.' But Samuel did not regard even this pious disposition of Saul and the people to make wholesale sacrifices to the Lord as a valid excuse, for he said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

We have many examples recorded of doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, which are written for our admonition, and to which we shall do well if we take heed, such as making clear the outside of the dish, the whitening of sepulchres, the straining at gnats, the drawing nigh unto the Lord with our lips, the tithing of mint and the making void of the law of God by our traditions, and the teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; but to all such deceitful workers how terrible are the words, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully."

What multitudes are at this very day professing to be the ministers of God, interpreters of the will of God to men, who, instead of preaching peace on earth and good will to men, are appealing to the most violent passions of their fellowmen, and with all their ability fanning the flame of discord, war and carnage. Rivers of human blood have marked the history of these deceitful workers from the days of Cain to the present hour. This very class has caused more bloodshed on the earth by their deceit and hypocrisy than has ever been shed from all other causes since the world began, yet they pretend to be doing the work of the Lord. At one time we find this deceitful clan engaged in getting up their union prayer meetings simultaneously throughout the land, all loving, melted in sympathy for the poor Hottentots, or the barefooted Indians of some foreign desert, and promising to usher in a glorious millennium in a very short time. Anon we hear them praying for war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt. They are a praying people, and have been famous for their long prayers in public places for ages past. But to detect the deceitful manner of their prayers, let their prayers be compared with the instructions given to the disciples by their Lord and Master: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they maybe seen of men." "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," etc. To this instruction our Lord has added: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew

6:5, 9-15) Again: “And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.” (Luke 11:4) “But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.” (Luke 6:27,28) There are very many lessons of prayer of this kind taught by the Savior to his disciples, but in no instance has he instructed them to pray for fire to destroy their enemies, or for God to help us to take vengeance on our supposed or real foes; nor are we at liberty to ask God to forgive our sins, only as he has made us willing to forgive all who have trespassed against us. Let those who profess to be doing the work of the Lord, in praying or in preaching, or in any other way, be tried by the words of him who is the supreme Judge of quick and dead, and from whose decisions there is no appeal, and mark what multitudes are under the curse, as they are manifestly doing the work of the Lord deceitfully.

“And cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.” In the war which God instituted between Moab and Israel we have figuratively presented the conflict which is now raging between antichrist and the spiritual Israelites. In the type the warfare was carnal, but in the Christian warfare no carnal weapons are allowed to be used. Moab, as we have shown, as well as all the other tribes and nations which were hostile to Israel, were figurative of the various organized powers of earth and hell, against which the great Captain of our salvation leads forth the soldiers of the cross. Those who were in the type were, like Saul and David, to use carnal weapons, and forbidden to keep back their swords from blood, where God commanded them to shed blood, were, as we understand the types, to teach us that in our spiritual conflicts we are to make no compromise with error, no treaty with the man of sin, to give neither aid nor comfort to those who are hostile to the spirit or government of the King of Zion. It certainly cannot be construed to mean that as men in the flesh we are to indulge in hatred, wrath or vengeance against them, or to in the least injure them in their persons, property or reputation, for that would conflict with the lesson taught in the preceding part of our text. For we war not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Christ has said, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,” etc. But as his kingdom is spiritual, so our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. But still, as in the type, the war was to be uncompromising and earnest, so also in the antitype the soldiers of Jesus are to fight valiantly and constantly until they are honorably discharged from the conflict; then, like the valiant Paul, they may say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,” etc. In applying the language of our text: “Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood,” we understand those who professing to be the soldiers of Jesus, who from cowardice, or from any wicked affinity with the enemy, shall hesitate to contend earnestly for the faith, the truth, the order, the ordinances or the discipline of the gospel, shall thereby forfeit the fellowship of the saints. As they that were cursed in Israel were separated and put away from the congregation of the Lord, so those who will sympathize with the enemy, or countenance their errors, are guilty of keeping back their sword from blood, in the spiritual application of the text. Saul was not the only Israelite who kept back his sword from blood, in sparing Agag, and the sheep and oxen, which the Lord commanded him to destroy with his sword. Nor are we permitted to believe the cases are few or far between in christian profession wherein faithless soldiers are intermingled with those who “are called, and chosen, and faithful.” Saul was a carnal man, his sword was a carnal weapon, an instrument for inflicting injury and death. The true soldier of Jesus is spiritual, and his sword is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; it is not an instrument of cruelty, in a literal point of view, but it is nevertheless “quick and powerful, and 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.” What then required the carnal Israelite to utterly

destroy their adversaries with the edge of the sword, must signify that the spiritual Israelite is to demolish every stronghold of the enemies of the truth by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With this spiritual weapon no personal injury can be inflicted upon our fellow-men, while we smite offensively and defensively all who dare oppose the truth of God, and utterly cut off from our communion and fellowship all who fail to pronounce the gospel Shibboleth.

Perhaps in all ages of the christian dispensation there have been some connected with the church who have kept back their sword from blood, in the sense of our text, by indulging in a false sympathy for error itself, or for those who hold and plead for error, and they not only keep back their sword, if they ever had the sword of the Spirit, but also do all in their power to deter the more valiant soldiers of the cross from dashing Babylon's little ones against the stones. But they are accursed; that is, they are denounced in their cowardly and treasonable course by the declarations of the word of truth. The word of the Lord is: "Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows; for she hath sinned against the Lord." (Jeremiah 50:14)

Middletown, N. Y.,
October 15, 1862.

JEREMIAH 6:16

Elder G. Beebe: – Like the woman of Canaan, I persist in troubling you for your views on a portion of the Scriptures which I see so often alluded to in the "Signs of the Times", namely, Jeremiah 6:16: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." Your compliance will much oblige.

Matilda E. H. Welch.
Sikesville, MD,
January 6, 1862.

The above request was received in January last, at a season of the year when we were in receipt of more requests of the kind than we can respond to; it was laid aside for the time, and overlooked until the present. In now attempting to offer such views as we have upon the text, we hope that we may be enabled to present to the mind of our inquiring friend, and to others, that which may be, with the blessing of God, to some extent profitable and edifying.

It was the lot of the prophet Jeremiah to bear many messages of reproof from the Lord to the rebellious Israelites from time to time, for they were a stiff-necked and rebellious people. In the chapter from which the text under consideration is taken, the prophet pointed out some of the transgressions of Israel, and announced the judgments of the Lord which were impending, and with these faithful reproofs and solemn admonitions he repeats to them, from the mouth of God, the message contained in our text, saying, "Thus saith the Lord." Truly this was unquestionable authority; and as they professed to be the people of the Lord, in a peculiar sense, and were called by his name, and stood in a covenant relationship to him as their supreme Potentate, to whom they had so often and so solemnly pledged themselves, Whatsoever the Lord commanded us, that will we do, one would suppose they would at

once receive the mandate, and with all their ability endeavor to obey. But alas, they rebelled against the Lord, and said they would not do as they were commanded. This particular command which they refused to respect was, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask," etc. The command to stand in the ways implied that they were out of the ways, or had departed from the ways of the Lord. The ways of the Lord in which they were required to stand, and to walk, were clearly pointed out in the covenant, which embraced them. In that covenant they were required to stand; but they had often departed from it, and had turned frequently aside to by and forbidden paths. In that covenant they must stand in order that they might see, for from no other standpoint could they see clearly the things which they ought to see and fully comprehend. Out of the ways they were in the dark, and consequently they were ignorant, and required to be instructed in the ways of the Lord more perfectly; hence they were commanded to ask for the old paths. From this injunction we infer that they had got off from the old track, and probably into some new paths which had led them astray. This was frequently the case with them, and they were often reprov'd for their departure from the right way of the Lord, or from the way in which the Lord had commanded them to pursue. But now they are commanded to ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and to walk therein. No new path or way could answer, but one course was lawful for them, and the way which the Lord had marked out, and which had been traveled by the patriarchs, was the good way; it was good because God had directed it, and good because he approved of it, and good because in it they should find rest for their souls. But they had said by their words, or by their deeds, or by both words and deeds, that they would not walk in the old paths, in the good way, and consequently the way of peace they knew not, while pursuing their own newly invented ways and traveling in the paths of their own choice.

Stiff-necked and rebellious as the carnal Israelites were, their waywardness is recorded as a warning to the christian church of God, under the gospel dispensation, and written for our instruction. In that rebellious people we have a type of the church of God in her gospel organization. The covenant of works in which they were embraced was but the shadow of the covenant of grace and peace, in which the spiritual Israel are held, and the ceremonial law with all its precepts, ordinances and institutions, was a shadow of good things to come, pointing to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, written and engraved not on tables of stone, but written in their hearts and engraved on their inward parts, and pointing them to the New Testament as containing the infallible rule of their christian obedience.

The inconstancy, disobedience and wanderings of Israel under the Levitical law and priesthood, point to the disobedience and wanderings of the people of God, of whom they were the type, and indicate the shortcomings and inconstancy, which all christians more or less feel and deplore in themselves, and in others who profess to be the children of the new and better covenant. And therefore the spirit of the admonition of the text may be regarded as applicable to the children of God at the present time, especially to those who have departed from the laws and institutions of the gospel, and to those who are born of the Spirit and have not owned their Lord and Master by walking in the ordinances and institutions of his kingdom. To all such may it not be said, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths," etc?

First, the heaven-born but disobedient child, who has not entered upon the ways appointed for the humble disciples to walk in; is it not the voice of the Lord which calls him to come out of Babylon, or out of and be separate from the world, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he leads the way? To follow him in the sacred ordinance of baptism? Thus saith the Lord Jesus, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Stand ye in the ways, in all the ways which he has instituted by precept, in all the ways that he has marked out by his example. The servant of Abraham said, "I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." But there is but one way to that house for those who have a

right to enter there, and that is by the door. He that entereth not in by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. The Lord leads the blind in a way which they know not, and in paths which they have not known; and when he found Jacob in a waste howling wilderness, he led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of his eye. “So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.” Christ is himself the way. In him we are chosen, redeemed and saved, and in him we have our standing; and as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we are exhorted to walk in him, as members of him, of his body, his flesh and his bones. We are in him as we are vitally identified with his church, which is his body, and in him, in this sense of the word, the child of God is commanded to stand, and see, and to ask for the old paths, etc. We are in him as the way when we are within the sacred precincts of his authority, standing in the letter and spirit of his precepts, and here we can see, and inquire, and ask for the good way. We are not at liberty to devise or invent some new way, or attempt to improve upon the old way which God has cast up for the righteous to walk in. The sons of Hagar may ridicule the good old way, and point the finger of scorn at those who stand or walk therein, and sneeringly say, You are behind the times, You do not keep pace with the progress of the world; still we are to ask only for the old paths, wherein we trace the footsteps of the flock of Christ. We are told that there is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. All other ways and paths, except the old divinely authorized ways of Zion, are the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Not the new convert alone should heed the warning of our text; old disciples who have traveled long are to take heed lest they depart from the ancient pathway of holiness. To them the solemn admonition is addressed, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, the good way. If any have wandered, become bewildered, benighted and doubtful, they can depend on no other guide. The voice of the Lord recalls them to the path which they have departed from, and when they are wandering from the Lord they shall hear a voice behind them saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” That voice will direct to the old and good way, to the way of peace and rest. When bewildered travelers ask of men the way they desire to pursue, they will often tell of new routes, shorter distances, smoother roads and bypaths, etc.; but we are cautioned in the text to be sure and ask for the old paths, which will be distinguished from all others by the waymarks, which are only known by the wayfaring pilgrims who travel there. Travelers in the ways of Zion should be cautious of whom they ask in regard to the way.

We are informed that deceivers are in the world, some crying lo here, and others lo there, but believe them not. One reason why the psalmist so much desired to dwell in the house of the Lord forever, was that he might behold the beauty of the Lord and “inquire in his temple.” Reliable instruction will be found there, and only there, for the word of the Lord shall go forth from Zion, and on the word of the Lord alone it is safe for christians to rely. Elsewhere we may be informed what learned doctors think, and what popular commentators say, but in Zion the humble inquirer will hear what the Lord has said, and a “thus saith the Lord” is abundantly sufficient for them. Having made the inquiry, and obtained the important instruction, having found the good old way, marked as it is by the footprints of the Savior, and by his apostles and primitive disciples, the instruction is, “and walk therein.” There is no cause to hesitate; none ever stood in this way, or ever saw this way, but those whose privilege it is to walk therein. No fowl knoweth it, the vulture’s eye never saw it, the lion’s whelp never trod in it, nor shall fools err therein. For we are told it shall be for those, the wayfaring men, etc. If therefore God has revealed this way of holiness to any of us, however poor, weak, sinful or unworthy we may feel ourselves to be, we may rest assured that he has called us by grace to walk therein, and that we shall never find true gospel rest to our souls only as we walk therein. But they that wait upon the Lord shall have their strength renewed, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary,

and walk and not be faint; they shall find rest to their souls. This is only desirable to those who are tired, weary and faint, but these are the very characters whom Jesus calls, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” This is truly encouraging, for he is 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.

“But they said, We will not walk therein.” Ungrateful, rebellious and wicked as it is, young converts and old disciples, when they withhold their obedience to the precepts of the Lord, do say by their disobedience that they will not walk therein; but the Lord has said, If they walk not in my statutes, then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with many stripes. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they (who come to Mount Sinai) escaped not who refused him (Moses) who spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice once shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven, etc. “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 1, 1862.

MATTHEW 7:6

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

This text is found in the closing part of what is familiarly termed, Christ’s sermon on the mount, in which he taught them privately, and gave them lessons of instruction, which are the greatest importance to the saints in all subsequent ages. These instructions should often be examined and re-examined by the children of God, as they are given for their special benefit, and contain admonitions and precepts of the most vital importance. From the rich cluster of golden maxims and rules laid down for the observance of the disciples of the Redeemer in this sermon, we are requested to give our views on the text written at the head of this article, to which we will call the especial attention of the readers.

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs.” The things which were holy under the ceremonial law were the things which were especially consecrated, sanctified or set apart for holy purposes, as were the tabernacle, the ark, the altar and the consecrated things of the inner temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. The tribes themselves, being solemnly set apart from all the families of mankind, were ceremonially holy, and forbidden to intermingle with the other nations of the earth, and as a consecrated and holy people they were to live on consecrated and holy food; they were forbidden to eat that which was common or unclean. Of all the beasts of the field none but those which divided the hoof and chewed the cud were set apart by the special enactment of the Lord as the consecrated or holy sustenance of the consecrated tribes of the Lord, and these consecrated things must not be polluted by contact with other things which were not set apart; no mixture with anything else was allowed. All this was undoubtedly

to signify to us that God's chosen and redeemed people, who are born of God, receive from him spiritual and immortal life, which must be fed and sustained on spiritual and immortal food. This lesson is taught us in all the types and shadows going before. For instance, when God had created man out of the dust of the ground, he provided that the food necessary for man's subsistence should grow out of the same dust of the ground. His nature and composition being of the earth earthy, his subsistence must, to be adapted to the support of his earthly nature, be also earthy; and when man had transgressed the law of God and fallen under the curse, the earth out of which he was to subsist was also cursed for his sake, that it might be still adapted to his nature, as a fallen, sinful, earthy man. So in the figure we are taught that in the spiritual creation in Christ Jesus, they who are born of the Spirit of God must be sustained on spiritual things; as their spiritual life is in God, so is all their spiritual food and sustenance. The productions of the earth cannot feed and sustain the inward man, nor can all the joys of the Spirit, which do feed and sustain the new man, prevent the old man, the earthy nature, from requiring its earthly nourishment. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that flesh is of the earth earthy, and cannot be sustained without that food which is produced from the earth, and he that is born of God, although he might possess all the produce of the earth, would starve if he were not fed on that bread which cometh down from heaven. Except we eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus we have no spiritual life in us, for spiritual life can live on nothing else. Those who are thus born of God are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," etc., chosen, consecrated and set apart, "sanctified by God the Father," "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit," etc., cleansed and washed, purged and justified, they shall be called the holy people, and as a holy, consecrated people they are made partakers of the divine nature, and qualified to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, who is the true bread which came down from heaven. Then the things which are holy are appropriated exclusively to a holy people; a people which God has cleansed, and which we are forbidden to call common. This sanctified people are called sheep, lambs and doves, and by many other figurative names, but they are never called dogs or swine. A dog is a very different kind of an animal from a sheep or lamb; he neither divides the hoof, nor does he chew the cud, he is therefore unclean. His disposition is also very unlike that of the sheep or lamb; he is ferocious, quarrelsome, vicious, and, like the wolf, it is his nature to worry, scatter and kill the sheep. His food, or that on which the dog subsists, is not that which would feed the sheep and lambs, nor can the sheep and lambs subsist on what the dog can feed upon. The dog would starve in the richest pasture field, where the sheep would fatten, and the sheep would starve if fed only on what dogs delight to feed upon. Dogs are dangerous animals, and we are admonished to beware of them. Some of them are said to be dumb dogs that cannot bark; sleepy dogs, lying down, loving slumber, and greedy dogs that can never have enough. In Revelation 22:15, they are classified with sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

The admonition of the Lord in our text then clearly means that his disciples shall not give, nor minister the gospel, or its provisions, its promises, its comforts, its ordinances, or any of its commands, to any who are thus designated dogs, or who are in nature, disposition, practice or appetite as unlike the regenerated and spiritual people of God as dogs are unlike and inimical to the sheep and lambs. The gospel is food to the saints, because it is Christ; the preaching of the gospel is preaching Christ, and it is food to the spiritual, and hence the ministers of the gospel are commissioned to feed the sheep and feed the lambs; to feed the flock of God which he hath purchased with his own blood, but charged to give not that which is holy (and the gospel and all its ordinances are holy) to dogs. Dogs have no use for holy things, they can do them no good, for they are not adapted to their nature or suited to their appetites; besides, it is a desecration of holy things to give them to dogs or to swine. It is true, the

gospel is to be preached to every creature, to all nations, and in all the world, for a witness to all nations, but only those who have ears to hear can hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. The ministers of Christ have nothing but the gospel to preach, and that they must preach wherever God is pleased to open a door for them to preach and its effect will be to discriminate between the living and the dead. All who have been pricked in the heart by the life-giving power of the Spirit will gladly receive the word, as did the quickened on the day of Pentecost, while all others will mock and reject the testimony. But what we understand as being intended by this admonition is, that we are forbidden to attempt to christianize unregenerated men, by teaching them the letter of the word, and applying to them the ordinances of the gospel as a means of salvation, by catechisms, Bible classes, Sunday Schools, etc., as though we could so improve their carnal minds as to make them acceptable to God, without being born of the Spirit.

According to our understanding of the subject, every effort to apply the things of the Spirit of God to unregenerated men, is to give that which is holy to dogs. Theological institutions for giving ministerial qualifications to graceless youths for preaching, and to unrenewed children and adults for church membership, and for evangelizing the world by humanly devised plans and schemes, is an attempt to give that which is holy to the dogs, and is clearly a transgression of the authority of our Lord, and an open violation of the words of our text: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." It is not in the nature of swine to appreciate the value or beauty of pearls any more than it is the nature of dogs to relish the rich pasture on which the sheep feed. The children of God are in possession of jewels of inestimable value, which none but the children of God can appreciate or enjoy. Their spiritual privileges, their christian love and fellowship, their gifts and graces, their experimental joys and peculiar exercises, their knowledge of divine things, are all pearls of great value to them, but their excellency cannot be known or appreciated by those who know not God. There is a fitness and utility in exhibiting these pearls among those of like precious faith, but those who have never possessed them would rudely trample on them if cast before them, as swine would trample upon the most costly and precious jewels. Christians are greatly edified and comforted by speaking often to each other of all the way in which the Lord has led them; they can talk freely one to another of their joys and sorrows, their conflicts and victories, but should they make these things the theme of their conversation in the streets and market places, or in the synagogues of Satan, they would be treated roughly; infidels, Arminians, will-worshipers, like swine, would trample them under their feet, and turn and rend the child of grace. The psalmist said, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." They who fear the Lord can understand the language, they know too well the value of such precious pearls to despise or trample on them. But those who have only the religion of the world neither divide the hoof nor chew the cud, and, like swine, serve only their swinish appetites, their god is their belly and their glory is their shame. The swine seem to have but one desire, and that is the gratification of their ravenous appetite; cast before them the most costly and splendid gems, or pearls, and as they cannot eat them, they have no other use for them, and they would as soon trample on them as on the most common earth, and they will turn again and rend you, determined to obtain something that they can eat; so when the christian attempts to display the glorious things of the kingdom of Christ to unbelievers, they will sometimes be surprised to find that those with whom they labor cannot appreciate those experimental things of which they speak. Expostulate with them, and demonstrate what you say by the most clear and positive Scripture authority, and they will disregard your testimony and your Scripture, and trample both under their feet, and then assail you again with as much vigor and determined violence as though you had not exhibited to them your pearls.

Sheep, swine and dogs are not suitable companions for each other, they cannot live in good communion together, nor should unnatural amalgamation be attempted, but let the sheep be associated with sheep, and let them “beware of dogs,” and avoid the society of swine, and they will be more pleasantly and comfortably situated. The great and good Shepherd has told his flock, Ye “are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” He has chosen them out of the world, and called them to be a separate people. Let us then heed the admonition of our Lord, and give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast our pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend us.

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 1, 1862

PROSPECTS FOR 1863

Notwithstanding the dreadful scourge which has fallen upon our country, the devastation of war, dismemberment (at least for the present) of our States, the interruptions and suspension of postal intercommunication with the seceded States, by which nearly one half of our former circulation is cut off, the advance in the price of paper, and other expenses of a printing establishment, as also in the cost of nearly all the necessaries of life, we have been enabled to stem the tide to adversity, and to continue our publication thus far through the current year, which is now drawing to its close. And now we submit to our brethren, friends, patrons, subscribers, and agents, shall it be continued through another year? We will not now attempt to urge the importance of sustaining the “Signs of the Times”, as a medium of Christian correspondence, through which the afflicted saints can communicate words of consolation, and comfort, of admonition and instruction, to the tried and afflicted saints scattered abroad; for of the importance of our brotherly correspondence, each for himself can judge; but we find it necessary to remind the friends of the publication that to continue it, there are obstacles to be overcome, which the Editor and Publisher, single-handed, is unable to surmount.

Having, within the last two years, fitted up our office with one of Hoe’s Cylinder Presses, steam engine, and fixtures, at a great expense, we find ourselves, at the close of this year, about \$3,000 or \$3,500 in debt. The interest on this alone, together with increased, and still increasing, current expenses, admonish us that the friends of the paper must decide for us, and for themselves, whether we shall be sustained or not.

Some of our subscribers have informed us that owing to the excessive pressure of the times, they feel compelled to discontinue their support for the present, but intend again, if spared, to resume their patronage as soon as circumstances will permit. We are aware of the pressure of the times, especially as they bear upon the greater portion of our brethren: but we beg them to consider that to ensure the permanent continuance of the paper they, as well as ourselves, must make an unusual effort. There are probably but few of our friends, although generally in limited circumstances, but what can, from their limited resources, in the course of a year, save a small sum of one dollar, even if they should deny themselves of other indulgence: but there are some we know who love to receive and read the “Signs of the Times” who have no means of raising even that small amount. To each, however, it has been our uniform practice to send the paper gratuitously, and we have many of that class now on our list; beside

many who have neglected to pay their arrearses. We have thought we would make the following propositions:

First – Let every subscriber feel himself especially requested to make an exertion to increase our circulation by obtaining, beside his own, at least one new, paying subscriber.

Second – Those who are able and willing, beside paying in advance for their own, send in what they can afford to be applied to assist us in furnishing gratuitously the paper to such aged, or poor brethren or sisters, who desire to read, but are unable to pay, and all such contributions shall be faithfully so applied.

Third – Let those who are indebted to us, as soon as possible, remit the amounts due, and, if possible, forward also advance payment for the next year.

We feel so fully persuaded that our friends, and brethren will act on the foregoing suggestions that we shall, if life and health be spared, continue our labors through the next year; and then, if not sustained, we shall be compelled to discontinue the publication.

To us it seems there never has been a time when the publication of the “Signs of the Times” were so much needed as in these critical and trying times. While all is confusion and strife around us in the world, and while the witnesses are being slain, and as the tune of the overthrow of Babylon is so speedily advancing, let every feeble knee be confirmed, and every hand that hangs down be strengthened; and, “In the name of our God we will set our banners.”

Our terms for the next year, notwithstanding the increase in the price of the paper, etc., will be the same as formerly.

Brethren and friends, in ordering the “Signs of the Times”, please bear in mind that we shall be happy to also supply all orders for our “Baptist Hymn Book”. For terms, see advertisement on our last page.

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 15, 1862.

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE TWO WITNESSES

The minds of many of our brethren have been led, of late, to discuss the subject of the Lord’s two witnesses, and the prophecy concerning them, contained in the eleventh chapter of Revelation, compared with Zechariah 4:2-14. The attention of our readers was called to this subject about thirty years ago, by Brother Trott, who, at that time, expressed his convictions that the two witnesses were the gospel ministry; not that their number was literally reduced to only two, but from the legal provision in the ceremonial law, making two the smallest number admissible to establish any testimony; thus showing that the ministers of the gospel during the forty and two months, or one thousand, threescore days of their prophesying in sackcloth, should be reduced to the very smallest number requisite for maintaining the truth, in the face of great popular opposition, and under the most discouraging circumstances, as indicated by their clothing. In those early papers Brother Trott arrived at the conclusion that the forty and two months most probably commenced at or about the year 606, and adding to that period twelve hundred and sixty days, taking these days of prophetic time to mean as

many years, according to our common computation, would extend to about the year 1866, when these two witnesses should finish their testimony, and when the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be buried in graves, etc.

To us it seems quite remarkable that distinguished servant of God had at the very moment when the struggle was going on in the church of God, which resulted in a separation between the New School, or Mission Baptists, and the Old School, or strictly apostolic Baptists, in which the former took position with the whole sisterhood of the harlot daughters of Mystery, Babylon the Great, in support of all the novel and worldly religious inventions of the day, and in discarding the Bible as the only infallible standard of truth and righteousness, and the latter withdrawing her fellowship from those who then went out from us and took her bold position on apostolic ground, repudiating all religious creeds and maxims, doctrines and ordinances, institutions and combinations, for which she could find no warrant in the New Testament; to us, we say, it is not a little remarkable that our enlightened Brother Trott was at so early a day enabled to sound the alarm in Zion, and so clearly point out what he understood to be predicted for the half century which was then to ensue. The development of the Protestant beast which had risen out of the earth, commencing the making of an image of the papal monster which had risen out of the sea – the rapid advance of the image to its completion, and its investment of power to speak and command all men to worship the beast, to proscribe, persecute and ultimately put to death all who should not worship the image of the beast. We have watched for the last thirty years the progress of this man of sin, this son of perdition, and now witness, at the very time indicated, the fearful reality of what was foreshadowed in the faithful admonitions of our beloved brother; but the end is not yet.

As the time draws near many of our most discerning brethren, and among them brethren Stipp, Owen, Rittenhouse and others, are drawn out upon the same subject, and although at the first view there seems much discrepancy in their expositions of the two witnesses, there is a remarkable unison in their understanding of the time signified for the slaughter of the witnesses and of the powers by whom the slaughter shall be accomplished. In closely comparing the views expressed by our brethren, there does not seem to us to be so much want of harmony as we at first supposed. The present views of Brother Trott, expressed in a late letter, are that the Scriptures, and the church through the ministry, are the two witnesses; the one as the olive tree, supplying the golden oil, through Christ, as the golden bowl, conveyed by the golden pipes, the gifts of the Spirit, to supply the lamps, which burning with holy fire make the light which is reflected by the candlestick (the church) send forth its radiance. (We do not give Brother Trott's words, as his letter is not at hand, but according to our recollection.) One brother thinks the Holy Ghost and our Lord Jesus Christ are the two witnesses intended, and others again are equally confident that the two covenants, the Old and New Testaments, are meant. There is not so much difference in these explanations as some may apprehend, after all. Suppose we take the views of Brother Stipp, that Christ and the Holy Ghost are the two witnesses. The Holy Ghost is the spirit and life of all the Scriptures, and if the Scriptures could be separated from that spirit, the mere body of the Scriptures, deprived of all its real vitality, would be to us only a dead body, a mere form of words, without power or life. The church is the body of Christ; he is her life and immortality. To strip the church, as a witness, of her identity with Christ as her spiritual vitality, she would be as dead, in regard to spiritual things, as our natural body would be if all the natural life were taken from it. A living body is a body having life in it; take that away and it is only a dead body. This is certainly true in regard to the Scriptures, and also the church. But can the life of the Scriptures or that of the church be thus

separated? In one sense they cannot, in another we think they can. In the street of the city new Jerusalem, where the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, neither of these bodies can die, for there shall be no death there. But in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified, there is death. Solomon says, "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." (Proverbs 7:27) Remember these two witnesses are not to lie dead in Zion, but in Sodom and Egypt, and how? While the rulers of the darkness of this world altogether ignore the testimony of the Bible, and set up their own wisdom, works and wills as a higher law, they still pretend to venerate the book, and will not suffer it to be put in the grave. They are busily engaged in multiplying copies of it, and are flooding the land with Bibles. But mark, it is the Bible as a dead body, not as a book of inspired testimony, not as God's witness, that they venerate it; they rejoice over it as a dead body, while they oppose with all their might its testimony. Having now succeeded in gaining a controlling influence over the popular mind, they rejoice and send gifts one to another, because this witness which has in former times tormented them is dead, as a witness in support of truth and righteousness, and against fanaticism and will-worship. In regard to the doctrine of salvation by grace, the Bible is no longer regarded as a witness, either in Sodom or Egypt. As a witness it is dead, but the body is prostrate in the street; nor is its testimony admitted in regard to any of the ordinances or institutions that characterize the church of God in the apostolic age. The divine government of God, as testified in the Scriptures in regard to the relations of servants and masters, parents and children, citizens and magistrates, is superseded in the public streets by what is familiarly called a higher law. Those who profess to be the divinely authorized exponents of the sacred volume, instead of proclaiming "Peace on earth," are making the most violent appeals to the maddest passions of men to drench the earth with human gore, and their pulpits are made to ring with the loudest blasphemies that ever fell on human ears. Death is the separation of the vital spirit from the body which had been animated by it. Allowing then that the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost, is the spirit of inspiration, and that God spake to the patriarchs by the prophets, and holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the rejection of the testimony of the Bible, in its spirit, as the testimony of God, while the book itself is retained in its letter, is to separate the life from the body, and in its absence from that spirit it is dead.

But we see also the church of God slain as a witness. It is true the church of Christ can never be deprived of her vitality in Christ, for her life is hid with Christ in God; but in her testimony, as a witness, through her ministry she is disregarded. A few weeks since, a committee visited the president of the United States, purporting to be the representatives of the clergy of all denominations of Christians; as such they were received by the chief magistrate of our nation. Their business was to persuade him to annul the relationship which God had instituted between two classes of the human family. But was there in the committee, or in the convention which they represented, a single member of the church of the living God? Not one; yet they presented themselves and were accepted as the representatives of every Christian denomination. True, the church of God shall and does dwell alone, and is not reckoned with the nations, but the officially recognized body of the church is a body without a particle of spiritual life – a dead body. But this loathsome carcass cannot be one of the witnesses intended, for it has not been prophesying forty and two months in sackcloth; it has not been slain, nor have we any hope that the spirit of life from God will ever animate it with vitality. The true church of God, the mystical body of our Lord Jesus Christ, has been prophesying in the time and manner signified, and her testimony as one of God's witnesses has been, like the leaves of the tree of life, for the healing of the nations. To her peaceful doctrine, her Christ like example and the effect of her testimony to the world, may be attributed all the ameliorating influences tending to the great cause

of”on earth peace, good will toward men,” which have relieved the nations of the earth from heathen darkness and the most abject wretchedness. As a witness for God and truth, the church has encountered the most determined and bitter opposition of all other sects and denominations of religionists, from her organization at Pentecost to the present time. But as a witness for God and truth, her voice is no longer heard nor admitted, either in Sodom or Egypt. The place where our Lord was crucified is the place assigned in prophecy for her to be slain. The gross and unnatural wickedness of Sodom, the darkness and bondage of Egypt, were figurative of the influences brought to bear in effecting the crucifixion of our Lord. The scribes, Pharisees and priesthood, and the perverted civil authorities of Judea and Rome, were blended in the accomplishment of the tragedy of Calvary, and the same or similar influences must be developed in silencing the witnesses of the Lord. Our modern scribes, Pharisees, priests and clergy are now the rulers of the darkness of this world, and having gained a commanding ascendancy over Sodom and Egypt, have they not effectually slain the church of God as a witness, so far as Sodom and Egypt are concerned? Yet the church is not exterminated nor put in a grave; she is still visible to her enemies as a prostrate antagonist, while over her, and over the dead body of the Scriptures, they who dwell on the earth (not on the sea of glass) rejoice, make merry and send gifts one to another.

Our object in this article is not to offer any new light on the subject of the two witnesses, as we do not feel competent to do so, but rather to show that the views of our brethren, which have been published in our columns for thirty years past, are not as discordant as some have apprehended. If in reality the witnesses are now slain, according to the prophecy, the triumph of antichrist will be short. The three days and an half of the virtual suspension of their testimony will soon be numbered, and at their fulfillment a more glorious state will be ushered in than the church has experienced for twelve hundred and sixty-three years and six months at least, if not more brilliant than has been witnessed since her organization. But whether our views on this important subject, and those of our brethren, are correct or not, it is beyond all reasonable doubt that we are approaching a momentous period in the history of the church, in which the Savior’s admonition should be solemnly regarded: Take heed that no man deceive you. As he commandeth his disciples to watch the signs which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, so are the saints of the present time admonished to watch the signs which indicate the destruction of Babylon. The sovereign order from his awful throne is now being heralded in thunder tones: “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Rev. 18:4) “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” (Rev. 16:15)

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 15, 1862.



EZEKIEL 18:27,31; 33:11

Elder Beebe: – If it will not be trespassing on your time and patience too much, you will oblige an occasional reader of the “Signs of the Times” by giving your views on Ezekiel 18:27,31; also 33:11.

Very respectfully,

E.G.D.

Howard Co., MD, Nov. 22, 1862.

Our friend, E. G. D., must be but an occasional reader of the “Signs of the Times” if he has not been able to learn our views on the nature and bearings of the covenant of works, with its conditions, rewards and punishments, as enjoined upon the house of Israel when under the legal dispensation, as we have been frequently called on to express them through our columns during the thirty years of our labors in the publication of this paper. Still, as our object is to set forth the truth, and expose error, we desire to respond to the inquiries of our occasional as well as our constant readers.

The portion of Scripture referred to reads as follows: “Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.” “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

These appeals were not made indiscriminately to the family of mankind, but in both chapters they are addressed to the house of Israel. The house of Israel means the family of Israel or Jacob, those who compose the household. Those who were embraced in the covenant of circumcision, which was a covenant of works, based upon the conditions explicitly set forth in the covenant, which were, that if the sons of Jacob would faithfully, truly and constantly obey all the precepts of the law which was given exclusively to them, they should live, and as a reward for their fidelity and strict obedience God would preserve them from the sword of their enemies, from the famine and from the pestilence; from all the agencies which waste and destroy human life, and they should surely live. As the apostle says, “The law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them.” (Gal. 3:12) This is precisely in substance what God has said to the house of Israel by the mouth, or pen, of Ezekiel in our text; the man that doeth that which is lawful and right shall live, or preserve his soul alive. None but sinners are mortal, hence none but sinners can die, and sin is the transgression of the law, and where there is no law there is no transgression or death, for the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. The same apostle, in the same connection, and dwelling on the same subject, says, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith.” (Gal. 3:10-12)

The attentive reader of the Scriptures will not fail to perceive that the law which was given as a conditional covenant to the nation or commonwealth of Israel, was the shadow of good things to come, and consequently typical in all its provisions, precepts and tendencies; it was adapted to them as a carnal people, and all who were circumcised in their flesh were debtors to do the whole law; that is, to obey all its precepts, on pain of death. The death to which it sentenced its delinquents was temporal, to be executed by sword, famine or pestilence, or by depriving the offender of his natural life. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. The penalty was often executed

by stoning the convict with stones until he was dead. The blessings awarded to the willing and obedient were that they should eat the good of the land, they should be protected in their persons and property from sword, pestilence and famine, and their corn and wine and oil should be increased, and their days should be long and prosperous in the land which the Lord their God had given them. There is not in all the law of Moses a promise of one spiritual blessing for obedience, or any other than temporal judgments for their disobedience. Neither heaven or hell were promised or threatened in that law. For if a law had been given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. All the Old Testament saints, and all the saints from the days of Abel, depended for eternal life with every spiritual blessing alone on the blood and righteousness of the Savior who was to come; and all mankind, including Gentiles as well as Jews, who were or are not interested in that blood and righteousness, have stood justly condemned to bear the wrath of God forever, from the moment they all sinned against God in their father Adam; from the moment Adam transgressed, not the law of Moses, but the law of God, under which he was, death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. From that hour to the present no other blood has ever had or ever will have the power to atone for that sin, or cleanse from that guilt, but the precious blood of Christ, as of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Rivers of blood of victims offered in sacrifice under the Levitical priesthood could not take away sin, or purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. The law of Moses was not required to consign sinners to hell, for they were already condemned, with the wrath of God abiding on them. In evidence of this the apostle tells us that death reigned from Adam to Moses; that was during the whole space of time from the entrance of sin into the world until the giving of the law of Moses, for until the law, or prior to it, sin was in the world, and it being in the world, was fully demonstrated by the reign of death. Now, as the law by Moses was not given to give immortality or eternal life, and as the Scriptures affirm that it could not give it, the conclusion is unavoidable that the life spoken of in these passages in Ezekiel was temporal life, secured by obedience to the Mosaic law to the Hebrews who were under it, and not that eternal life which Jesus says he gives to his sheep, or to his redeemed people. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Not given through the law, nor through our obedience to the law, for it is not of works, lest any man should boast. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:3,4)

Such, then, we see was the nature of the law by which the house of Israel was distinguished from all other nations and tribes of mankind as a covenant of works, resting all its provisions of rewards and punishments on conditions of their obedience, it bestowed all its temporal blessings on them for their obedience, and dealt all its temporal judgments on them for their disobedience. When they did that which was lawful and right, God gave them corn, wine and oil, fought their battles, subdued their enemies, caused their land to yield abundant supplies for their subsistence, and when they rebelled, disregarded the law and committed abominations, these temporal favors were withheld, and they were scourged with such temporal judgments as sword, famine and pestilence, were delivered into the hands of their enemies, and they were made to languish and die, as these were the stern conditions of the law as a covenant of works. Hence the expostulations contained in these passages of Ezekiel, all that was said, was what they knew were the terms and conditions of their covenant. When they sinned they died, when they obeyed they lived; and they were held personally responsible. The unjust parable which they had used, that, The fathers had eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge, was shown by the expostulations of the prophet to be unjust and wicked. And such were the provisions of the

covenant, that if a wicked man (an Israelite, of course, for none but Israelites were embraced in the covenant,) turned from his wickedness and did that which was lawful and right, he should live; he should be restored to all the privileges of that covenant. But if a righteous man ceased to do righteously, and committed wickedness, his former righteousness should not shield him from the penalty of the law, or save him from being put to death for his wickedness.

These Israelites of the house of Israel, as we see in Ezekiel 18, had turned away from their obedience to the law, and were exposed to the penalties of the law, which was death, but as the covenant which they were under contained this provision, they were called on by the prophet to reform, and live, to cast away all their transgressions, make them a new heart and a new spirit, and they should live. Thus showing that the salvation which was typified in the law, was such a salvation as could only be effected by that divine power which is required to make a new heart, and to create within them a right spirit, and that no man can perform this work the prophet shows; in chapter 36 the Lord says, "I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went." "Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen." "And I will sanctify my great name," etc. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." By comparing Ezekiel 18:31,32, with chapter 36 we see what the law demands. Who is able to make himself a new heart? Who can create in himself a new spirit? Or who is able to cast away all his transgressions? Those who know the law despair of ever being able to meet its requisitions. But God reveals from heaven his method of grace and salvation, and proclaims what he himself will do, and in the Scriptures copied from Ezekiel 36, promises to meet every requisition demanded in Ezekiel 18:31, and to do it for his own name's sake.

The passage, Ezekiel 33:11, is also an expostulation with the house of Israel, in regard to the provisions of the covenant of works, and a full denial of the unjust murmurings of that stiffnecked and rebellious people, in which they virtually charged God with delighting in their sufferings. This imputation is refuted by an exhibition of the provisions of their covenant of works.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 1, 1862.

FEET WASHING

The letter from Brother Hargrove, which was commenced in our last number, and concluded in this number, presents his views, and probably the views of many very highly esteemed brethren on that subject. We have no disposition to offer any remarks on the subject at this time, only, as we presume that about all that can be suggested, pro or con, has been laid before our readers, we would prefer that

the subject should now rest, for the present, at least. All parties, so far as we are informed, have agreed that they will not make a difference of our understanding of it, a bar of fellowship, but leave all free to answer the honest conviction of their own minds, in regard to its literal observance. We hope that no unkind feelings may be indulged by those who differ, seeing that the difference is confined to that subject, and does not, as we can perceive, effect any other item of the faith or practice of Old School Baptists.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 15, 1862.

END OF VOLUME THIRTY

With this number we complete our Thirtieth Volume. According to the general estimation of the longevity of mankind, in this period of the world, a generation has filled up the measure of its days, and passed away, never more to return to the transitory scenes of time, since we commenced our labors in conducting the publication of our humble sheet. We have neither the time or space to sum up all the changes which thirty years have wrought, what numbers who patronized us in the commencement have finished their course on earth, and have gone to their destiny in the world of spirits. Many of our valued correspondents have written their last communication for our columns, their labors of love are completed, – and many who extended to us their wishes for our success, in what thirty years ago seemed to be a hazardous undertaking, have also passed away – but others still survive who have steadily, faithfully, and kindly sustained us throughout the whole period, are still preserved. We also may, with propriety, record a change in regard to ourselves. In the prime of life, being but about thirty-one years of age at the commencement of this publication, we have become old and infirmed, yet blessed with a good degree of health, and we have great reason to thank God for his preserving goodness and sustaining power manifested in sparing our life, and in all the deliverances he has so graciously bestowed upon us.

In regard to the history of our paper, but few of our readers need to be informed as most of them have observed that we have not enjoyed uninterrupted tranquillity, nor altogether escaped the perplexities and trials to which our position has exposed us. But it is our happiness to say that the Lord has been very gracious, and we are still preserved.

The calamitous war which is now raging in our country has had a very depressing effect on our circulation, depriving us of all that portion of our subscribers south of the disputed lines, and has rendered our facilities for supplying our paper regularly to those of our subscribers who live in some of the border States, very precarious, on account of the frequent interruption of our mails, has greatly reduced our number of subscribers, and the effects of the war has been felt severely by many in our Northern States, who are deprived of the means of making their wonted remittances. These causes, together with the greatly increased expense of publishing, and the depreciation of our paper currency, would suggest the propriety of suspending the publication for the present, were it not for the fact that in such trying times its publication is more imperiously demanded than at other times. When war is devastating our country, and few families escape the loss of some cherished member, while the

lowering clouds gather blackness, and a general gloom is depicted on the countenance of those who love peace: and while the former facilities for private correspondence is, to a great degree, cut off, Christians who have formerly enjoyed the privilege of speaking often to each other, through the “Signs of the Times” would regard it as a severe calamity if, in addition to all their other trials, they should be deprived of the consolation of hearing from each other through this medium of correspondence.

However hard the times may press upon the brethren, this is undoubtedly the more economical method of corresponding. Our letter can, through this medium, be read by several thousands, and each number will, in return, bring to the writer several letters of profitable and, in these times, cheering correspondence from various parts of the country.

But, after all that may be said by us on the subject, it is for our brethren, sisters, and friends to say whether, under all the circumstances, the privilege of hearing from each other twice a month, from all accessible parts of our country, is worth to them the expense of One Dollar a year, and, as they shall elect, we shall be governed.

Before we close this article, we wish to return our grateful acknowledgments to our former patrons, and also to those have favored us with their correspondence; and, as many of those who have contributed liberally in former times to fill up our columns, have either been called home to their crowns of immortality, or are so situated, by the belligerent condition of our States, as to prevent them from presenting to us their letters of love and fellowship, the Lord has graciously raised up others to fill up the ranks, and supply profitable and interesting correspondence, so that we have no reason to doubt that the forth coming volume will be fully as interesting and edifying as any which have preceded it.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 15, 1862.

ACTS 6:1

Vigo County, Indiana

Dear Brother Beebe: – Time admonishes me to renew my subscription; and I will also write a few lines to acquaint you of my removal to Permento, Vigo County, Indiana. Your valuable paper, the *Signs of the Times*, has come to me very regularly, filled with the rich treasures of gospel truth; and they have been a great satisfaction to me. I would not do without them for double the amount of what they cost, as long as they can be had, and I am spared to read them; for they contain so many communications from the scattered lambs of Zion’s fold. I am made to rejoice and thank the Lord that he has not left himself without witnesses. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever; for he changes not. He said, “For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” (Mal. 3:6) Brother Beebe, is not this a dark time – a time of thick darkness that can be felt? I hope the lambs of the Redeemer will continue to write, as we read; “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name.” If I could write like some of the brethren and sisters, I think I would write a great deal; for their

writings are strengthening to me on my pilgrimage, and I love to hear from God's chosen ones. They all understand each other, and speak the same things.

The church of Christ is a unit here, and will be a unit through the countless ages of eternity. I will have to conclude this poor scribble. I would like to have your views on Acts 6:1: "And in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." What I desire to know is, what the daily ministration was, seeing that the apostles appointed seven chosen men over this business, and they, being scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word. Your views on this subject will greatly oblige an anxious inquirer after the truth. Hoping that the Lord may long continue to send your welcome messenger abroad, and give you wisdom and strength according to your day, I subscribe myself,

Your brother in hope of eternal life,
Shadrack J. Payne

Reply – The daily ministration spoken of in the text was that of food, as we clearly infer from the reason assigned for appointing the seven men; for it was not reason that the apostles should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Brother Payne will observe that in those trying times of early persecution, those who professed the religion of Christ and united with the disciples, according to an agreement of their enemies, were cast out of the synagogues of the Jews, and disfranchised from the privileges which other Jews enjoyed as citizens of a province under the Roman government. They were generally deprived of their property and driven away from their homes by the violence of the persecution. Under this trying state of things it was agreed that those who came into the number of the disciples should sell their property, which otherwise they would lose by confiscation, and bring the proceeds in money, and lay it down at the apostles' feet. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need." (Acts 2:44,45) Again: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessed of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need," etc. (Acts 4:32-35) See also verses 36 and 37, and chapter 5:1,2.

From these scriptures we see that the disciples cheerfully cast all that they possessed into a common stock for the common benefit of all the disciples, without reserving any special claim of ought that they had possessed. And all the disciples were to be supplied daily from this common stock. But, as the disciples had made the apostles the trustees of all their property, it is not strange that when the number of the disciples had multiplied to thousands, and the common fund had accumulated accordingly, that the trusteeship had become too great a burden to the apostles, and interfered with the discharge of their apostolic duties in preaching the word. Hence, the necessity of electing suitable men to take this trusteeship, or supervision of the funds, and to minister, or deal out from it daily to all the disciples, as every one had need. The apostles, it seems, in attending to the word of God, had necessarily paid less attention to the daily ministration, or distribution of the provisions than they otherwise would. This had produced some disaffection and murmuring among the Grecian disciples, who complained that their widows were neglected, and did not fare as well as did the Hebrew widows. Whether their disaffection was based on jealousy or reality, we are not told: but the apostles availed themselves of the occasion to

propose the selection of seven men, of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost; as in such men all the disciples would have the most perfect confidence; and in transferring the labor and responsibility of supplying all the tables daily of all the disciples, the apostles would be greatly relieved.

As we have this apostolic example before us, the question very naturally arises, whether the church, in all ages, is not bound to conform to the same pattern? The apostles have informed us that we have them for examples. And it is our candid judgment that in this matter, as in all others, we are bound to be governed by their examples. But, still it is to be remembered that this arrangement was confined to the peculiar circumstances of their case, as we do not find the same requisition made on the Gentile churches, when each one was allowed the right of stewardship over his own property, but with the injunction, however, that each one should appropriate, according as the Lord had prospered him, for the relief of destitute saints, or any other necessary expenditures of the church, and for sustaining those who labored among them in word and doctrine. Were we situated precisely now, as the disciples were at that time, there can be no doubt that it would be our duty to relinquish the stewardship of all our worldly possessions, to be disposed of for the common benefit of all the saints.

Even as we are now situated, having (to some extent) the constitutional right to hold the title of our houses and lands, in our own names, still, as disciples of Christ, there is not, in all his church, a single disciple who has an exclusive right, according to either the letter or spirit of the gospel, to call ought that he possesses his own. Every saint is taught by the Word and Spirit that he or she is a steward, under God, of all our possessions, and that we do not possess one farthing of it all, so exclusively as our own, as to permit us to withhold it when the cause of God, the welfare of his church, or the sufferings of any of his saints require it. To the full extent of all God has entrusted us with we are solemnly bound to appropriate it, according as God has prospered us, for the relief of the destitute saints, whether they be Grecians, or Hebrew, Jews, or Gentiles.

There was instruction given to the Gentile churches to support their widows, who were widows indeed; and that too without exacting of them to labor after they had attained the age of sixty years, if they had entertained strangers, washed the disciples' feet, etc. But to prevent lazy drones from coming into the church, to be fed on the bounty of the church, Paul gave orders that those able-bodied men and women in the churches who would not work, or exert themselves to procure a living for themselves, that neither should they eat. But widows, who were widows indeed, were to be honored, and double honor should be awarded such Elders as ruled well, especially to such as labor in word and doctrine; for said he, "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the laborer is worthy of his reward." (I Tim. 5:9,10,17,18) So also in all the necessary expenses of the church, in providing a comfortable place of meeting, assisting the poor of the church to get to the meetings of the churches, or in assisting traveling ministers, to bring them on their way, or the expenses of the messengers of the churches in visiting sister churches as messengers, or as messengers to the associations of the churches, the burden of the expenses should be borne according as God had prospered every one. And no one will be allowed to shirk out from his or her equitable share of such burdens, without bringing leanness into their own souls. To withhold more than is meet tendeth to poverty.

But there is one thing more we will notice while on this subject; The seven men appointed to have charge of this matter have generally been regarded as deacons. The character they were required to bear, as honest men, full of the Holy Ghost, men in whom all the church has the fullest confidence, agrees well with the character and qualification required of deacons, (I Tim. 3:8-13) strongly favors the conclusion that the seven men, their qualifications and their special work, is to be regarded as pointing

out the office and work of deacons. If our conclusions be admitted, it must follow that the deacon's work is to make requisition from the churches of the necessary means, and to find out the needy of the churches, and to apply the relief faithfully, honestly, and in the fear of the Lord. The daily or weekly, or annual ministration of the churches to secure the comfort of the saints is embraced in his appropriate work. Also, to see to the administrators of the word, that they be not involved with serving tables, or embarrassed with temporal things, so as to hinder their usefulness in the gospel ministry. Every disciple of Christ, as we understand, is bound to contribute, according as the Lord has prospered him, or her, and so supply the deacons of the church with the means to carry out the instructions implied in the precepts and examples which we have called attention to in the consideration of this subject. The fearful example of Ananias and Sapphira, in keeping back part of the price, should admonish every disciple who has professed to consecrate himself with all that he is or has to the Lord, against the sin and idolatry of covetousness. May we all be prepared to sing with the poet –

“All that I am, and all I have,
Shall be forever thine:
What e'er my duty bids me give,
My cheerful hands resign.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
January 15, 1863

BAPTISM

Cromwell, Indiana

Brother Beebe: – The *Signs of the Times* still continues to come as a welcome messenger to us, and we wish to have them continue to come as long as we can raise the money to pay for them. In your last you requested each subscriber to try to procure at least one additional subscriber, and I have done so. You will find the money enclosed, etc.

Brother Beebe, I am going to trouble you for your opinion. I will name the circumstances: We had two Baptist preachers here last spring, and there are five or six Baptist members here – but they are not organized in a church – and there were one or two who wished to be baptized, but the members, under present circumstances, did not wish to go into a constitution. Now, would it have been right or wrong for one of those preachers to have baptized those persons, if they had given him a satisfactory evidence of their hope in Christ? I would like to have your opinion on the subject.

William H. Smith

Reply – If there was no Baptist church of our faith and order near, and the preacher, and the brethren in the vicinity, were satisfied that the applicants for baptism were proper subjects of the ordinance, we can see no valid reason why they should not be baptized on profession of their faith in Christ. The commission to preach the gospel, not only authorizes the commissioned ministers, but commands them

to baptize believers, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The apostolic practice was to baptize all such, as in the case of Philip, and the Eunuch, the Jailer, Lydia, and many other instances. Yet, where there are constituted churches of the gospel faith and order, within a reasonable distance, it would be presuming for an itinerant minister to receive and baptize without the concurrence and fellowship of such church. Of course, we only speak of the case as stated above. We do not know whether the brethren mentioned were all agreed in regard to the reception into their fellowship of the persons wishing to be baptized: but on the supposition that there was nothing more in the way, the brethren being unorganized as a church, we should not regard as a valid objection, if that were all.

Middletown, N. Y.,
January 15, 1863

PSALM 2:12

“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

Many, in commenting on this text, either from ignorance or design, grossly pervert its plain and obvious application, and represent it as being addressed generally to unregenerate sinners, warning them to make their peace with God by embracing his Son, espousing his cause, or by becoming his disciples. A careful examination of the context will clearly show that nothing could be more foreign to the plain import, not only of the text, but also of the whole Psalm. The text is addressed to the kings and judges of the earth, especially to those of the Gentile nations, at, and subsequently to, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into the world.

With a prophetic view of the advent of the Son of God, the inspired writer demands, Why did the heathen, or Gentiles, rage, and the people, or Jews, imagine a vain thing? This was literally the case, and this Psalm is repeatedly referred to in the New Testament, to show that its predictive bearing looked forward to the incarnation of Christ and the opposition of Jews and Gentiles to him and the kingdom which he came to set up and to preside over. “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” This was literally fulfilled in its primary allusion to Christ and the primitive days of his kingdom, and is still being fulfilled in relation to the rage and opposition of both Jews and Gentiles to his cause and kingdom on the earth. So forcibly did this prophecy apply to the early persecutions of the primitive saints, that the apostles, and the whole company of the saints, “lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” (Acts 4:24-28) But to show how utterly futile and unsuccessful should be the opposition and

rage of men and devils, in their attempt to thwart the purpose of God and prevent the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, the psalmist adds, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." And when they shall have exhausted all their power and wrath, when they shall have crucified the Lord's anointed One, when they shall have done all that God would suffer them to do in opposing, "Yet [saith he] have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Their united opposition, their wrath, their counsel, their imaginations and their rage, could not prevent the exaltation of the Son of God to his mediatorial throne, nor could they dispossess him of any of that power with which he is invested, to reign over the kings, rulers and potentates of this world. For all powers are put under his feet, and he is inaugurated and mounts the holy hill of Zion, to be the Head over all things to his church, with power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father has given unto him. With all the power of heaven and earth, he reigns King of kings and Lord of lords. What folly, then, what madness for men, even for kings and rulers of the earth, to oppose his government or restrict his dominion, which is from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. Now seated high upon his imperial throne of power and majesty, the Son of God proclaims the great decree: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth or thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." By this decree the Son of God inherits all his Father's power over the kings and kingdoms of men. His rod of iron signifies sovereign power to rule and dash the kingdoms of this world to pieces.

In view of the reigning power of Christ with all the angels of heaven at his command, possessing all the omnipotence of the Father, who shall be able to resist his matchless sway, and his supreme control of all things and of all events?

"What mortal dare
With the eternal God compare?"

"Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Among the ancients, to kiss a superior was a token of recognition of superiority and loyal submission, as when Samuel anointed Saul to be king over Israel, he kissed him, saying, "Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" (I Samuel 10:1) And in speaking of those whom the Lord had reserved from serving Baal, the Lord said, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." (I Kings 19:18) And this figure is used to signify the reconciliation of hostile parties: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Psalms 85:10) It was also a token of pacification, as when Jacob met his brother, Esau: "And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him." (Gen. 33:4) These examples will suffice to show in what sense the kings, judges and rulers of the earth are admonished to kiss the Son, by acknowledging his supremacy, as the Lord's Anointed, as Samuel acknowledged the anointing of Saul; by loyal submission, by reconciliation to his government; by enacting no laws in opposition to him, or calculated to oppress his people; by refraining from all attempts to annul any of his ordinances or institutions, or to improve upon any of his precepts; by refraining from all attempts to be wise above what is written by inspiration, and by an humble acknowledgment of their dependence on his power and providence; by carefully observing the words of David, "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." (II Samuel 23:3)

“Lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way,” etc. Fear to provoke his wrath. Remember that, with all your regal grandeur, ye are but dust and ashes before him. He has full control of you and all your principalities. Revere and dread his iron rod, with which he will break to pieces the nations that forget him, or that forget their responsibility to him. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings. When indications of his displeasure are manifested, heed them well; think not presumptuously to brave his almighty power; you cannot escape his rod, for, “The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his Anointed.” (I Samuel 2:10) When the proud monarch of Egypt hardened his neck in rebellion against God, it was that he should be destroyed. When the king of Babylon assayed to be like the Most High, it was that he should be brought down to hell. (Isaiah 14:12-14) Not only the kings and rulers, but the nations of the earth, have felt the weight of his iron rod. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem, which had been exalted to heaven, were thrust down to hell. Sodom and Gomorrah, Nineveh and Babylon, all present fearful examples unto those that after should live ungodly. (II Peter 2:6)

“And ye perish from the way.” As Christ taught his disciples in regard to discipline: “Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him,” etc. Thus signifying that the time for pacification was limited. So the admonition to kings and rulers of the earth implies the certainty that when by presumption or maladministration they have provoked the wrath of heaven and involved themselves and their kingdoms in vengeful clouds of wrath, they shall find it impossible to avert the retribution due to their rebellion against the Lord’s Anointed. “Be wise now, (not at some future period] therefore, O ye kings.”

“When his wrath is kindled but a little.” In the providential dealings of God with the children of men, he is long-suffering; if it were not so, all nations would sink beneath his wrath. But although he suffers long, and sends his rain upon the just and upon the unjust, until the cup of their iniquities is filled up, they shall not escape.

“Those heaps of wrath by slow degrees
Are forced into a flame;
But kindled, O how fierce they blaze,
And rend all nature’s frame!”

The time of earthly governments is brief and transient; the thrones of human governments contain the elements of their destruction, and when unjust rulers of the earth shall be driven away in their wickedness, they will surely then have perished from the way. No rocks nor mountains then can screen them from the presence of Him that sitteth upon the throne, nor hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.

In our remarks upon this text we have refrained from making an application of it to our own beloved country; not however because we are not embraced in the solemn admonition in the text to kings and rulers, for, according to our understanding of the subject, all the rulers of the earth are fully included. Indeed, all who rule, or have authority over their fellow-beings, are admonished in our subject to be wise, whether they be kings, governors, judges, parents, husbands, masters or overseers, to the extent of the legitimate power or authority with which they are invested. All are amenable to God, and are required to rule in the fear of God. “Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth;” and be wise now, therefore, O ye people, and may the God of heaven make all his saints wise unto salvation, for they that are wise shall be wise for themselves, and they that scorn, alone shall bear it.

The conclusion of our text is consoling to the people of the living God: “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” That is, in the Son; the Son unto whom power and dominion are given; exalted as God’s King. Whereas, it is written the kings of the earth set themselves. But God hath set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, and unto his Son he saith, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” None but the blessed of the Lord do really trust in him, and it is because God has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus that they are enabled to put all their trust in him. How blessed it is to trust in him, and not be afraid. Though the earth be removed, though mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, though the earth tremble at the swellings thereof, still, “They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.” O may this blessing be our own.

In conclusion, may not those blessed ones who are of the household of God, and built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, hail the eternal Prince who sits enthroned on Zion, and with holy reverence kiss the Son, bow down at his feet and say,

“Reign forever, wondrous Prince,
Born to redeem and strong to save.”

And by our humble reliance on him in all our tribulations manifest that we do trust in him, and in him alone. Above all things, let us who trust in the Lord endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and see that we fall not out by the way. The kingdom to which we, as the people of God, belong, shall never be destroyed, for our King is the mighty God and the Prince of peace; it therefore becomes us, as his subjects, as much as in us lies, to live in peace with all men, and especially with those who are of the household of faith; and it is the privilege and duty of those who know the Lord to call earnestly, devoutly and humbly on his name.

Middletown, N. Y.,
Feb. 1, 1863

MATTHEW 18:10; 13:26

Brother Beebe: – If it will not be too much trouble, please give us your views on Matthew 18:10, especially on the last clause. Also on Matthew 13:26, and oblige your unworthy brother.

Reuben D. Compton
Near Hardinsburgh, Kentucky

Reply – The first text on which we are desired to express our views is as follows: “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 18:10) These words are spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ in solemn admonition to his disciples, warning them of the magnitude of the wickedness of offending any of the little ones of his kingdom. “Woe to the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” The world is hostile to the kingdom of Christ, and in it the saints must have tribulation; there is a needs be for this, and God has assured us that these things shall, with all other things, work together for good to them that love

God, and who are called according to his purpose. Yet the final benefit of tribulations, offences, and opposition from the world, under the over-ruling power and providence of God to the saints, shall not shield the world, nor the men of the world, from the retributive woe pronounced on them because of offences. It were better that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. But these offences shall not only come from the *outside* world, or that portion of the children of men who make no profession of godliness, but from that worldly, earthly, sensual and devilish nature which all the saints have to grapple with while here in the flesh. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other.” And as the apostle James reminds us, from these lusts which war against the Spirit in all the children of God while in the flesh, comes wars, and even fightings among the children of God. And if any man flatters himself that he has not these sinning lusts or hostile propensities, which war against the Spirit, in him, he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him. Therefore Paul, in his address to the Elders of Ephesus, says, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29,30). And our Redeemer himself also warned his disciples that a man’s foe should be those of his own household. In this 18th chapter of Matthew, Christ as the Head of his Church, and King of saints, has laid down his law for the government and discipline of his members, and accompanied his precepts with the most solemn warnings and admonitions, as in our text, he says to his disciples, “*Take heed.*” Their most profound attention is required, dangers stand thick, which are to be apprehended; no heedless or careless deportment will be approved. The most important consequences are involved. “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.” The Saviour would not command them to take heed if there were no danger of their doing that which he warns them to avoid. It is true that the incorruptible spirit of life and immortality in them which is born of incorruptible seed by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, can not sin, because it is born of God, and therefore would require no warning, if it were not that those who are the subjects of this heavenly birth have also a carnal or fleshly nature which is born of the flesh, and which is of corruptible seed, and which warreth against the Spirit.

The *old man*, or carnal nature is to be put off, guarded against, and crucified with its affections and lusts, and the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, is to be put on. It is therefore in consideration of our depraved earthly natures that Christians are the subjects of these solemn admonitions; for with their mind (having the mind of Christ) they serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. The little ones intended are those who bear the characteristics set forth by the Master in the commencement of the chapter. “And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven,” etc. The disciples then, including the apostles, must become as little children, as an indispensable qualification to fill their position in the kingdom of heaven; and thus qualified they will assume to be but little children, – honest, simple, dependent, confiding and humble. To offend then the humble child-like disciple of the Lord Jesus was what even Christians were and are so liable to do, as to require this explicit warning from the Lord. To *offend*, however, in this scriptural sense of the word, means to cast a stumbling block, or an impediment in their way, to mislead them, or to cause them to offend, or to do that whereby they are diverted from the pathway of holiness, or thrown out of the fellowship of the saints, or deprived of any of their spiritual privileges, or in any way to do them wrong. This being what we understand to be the admonition given to the primitive disciples, and binding on the saints now, and

throughout all time, we will pass to notice the more weighty considerations by which our Lord enforced the admonition, which will bring us to the part of the text on which brother Compton more especially desired our views.

“For I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” The principle difficulty with many has been to understand in what sense the word *angels* is used in this text. Many interpretations have been offered by the learned, and the curious, which we hold to be altogether speculative, and unfounded. Some brethren, whom we highly esteem, have favored the idea that each saint, while here below, has an angel commissioned from the regions of glory, to keep a vigilant watch over them, and each has his respective angel. But we know of no scripture to sustain that idea. We know that the angel of the divine presence is always with them, and the angel of the everlasting covenant has a mediatorial charge over them; but *their angels*, in our text, is in the plural number, and in the possessive case, and implies that each saint has his respective angel, which is his own angel, and in communion with, and in the immediate presence of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the scriptures the term, or name, is given to the heavenly host, as to those who came to Abraham, to Joshua, to Hagar, and others, and appeared to the shepherds on the plains of Judea to announce the birth of our Redeemer; it is also applied to the ministers of the gospel, as messengers of the Lord; it is applied also to the devil, and his angels, or spirits which are in the world. But the sense in which it is used in our text is to designate the spiritual life, or identity, of every saint. A spirit without a material body is called an angel. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the body, and they also denied the existence of *angels, or spirits*; but the Pharisees confessed both. In this sense the term was applied to Peter, when the damsel announced to the disciples that Peter was at the gate knocking for admission, they supposing it to be impossible that Peter was personally there in body, said, “It is his angel,” by which they evidently meant it was his spirit, without the material body of flesh, or in distinction from his fleshly body, which they supposed was chained, and strongly guarded in the prison. These instances will suffice to show that the spiritual identity of the saints, in distinction from their earthly bodies, are denominated angels. So also when Christ shall come to raise up their bodies, at the last day, all his holy angels shall come with him, and their risen bodies shall meet them in the air, and so shall they be forever with the Lord. Paul says, “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more,” etc. (II Cor. 5:16) As the members of Christ’s spiritual body, the saints are only known as a spiritual people; neither male, or female, Jew or Gentile, bond, or free, but they are all one in Christ Jesus. They are not identified as members of Christ by that which is born of the flesh, but by that which is born of the Spirit, and consequently, is spirit, or angel. The spiritual life of the Christian is, therefore, what we understand to be intended in our text by *their angels*. These do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. Our fleshly eyes have never seen the Father at any time, nor can the eyes of our natural understanding, by searching, find him out; for the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned. But while the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love him, God has revealed these things to his saints by his spirit; for the spirit (or new man) searcheth all things: yea, the deep things of God. Yet he himself is judged of no man.

Understanding then that the new man, the spiritual man, the inner man, is the angel, and this angel is the life which was given us of the Father, is it not a manifest truth in the experience of all the saints that this life is hid with Christ in God, and that in him they do always behold the face of the Father – that they have fellowship with the Father, and with his son, Jesus Christ. In heaven they do always behold

the face of my Father. And certainly to see him, to behold him, is a heaven of heavens, to his saints; for in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures forevermore. God hath raised us up together with Christ, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And he hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. For Christ is the image of the invisible God. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.

When we contemplate the near and vital relationship of the children to their Father, God, and their intercourse at his throne, the view they have, by faith, of his awful majesty, does it not clothe the admonition of our text with inexpressable importance? They are in communion with the eternal God, they dwell under the shadow of the Almighty, what fearful responsibilities rest on us, brethren, that we should take heed that we offend them not! "Touch not," saith he, "mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm; for he that touches them touches the apple of mine eye. Could we, as Christians, always realize how precious God's little ones are in his sight, would it not lead us to love one another with a pure heart fervently? Every act of kindness, love, sympathy, and brotherly kindness done to them, even to give to one of them a cup of water in his name, is done to Jesus. "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; for inasmuch as ye have done it to these my disciples, ye have done it unto me." Saul was persecuting Jesus by persecuting and breathing slaughter against his disciples. They are one with him, and he makes their cause his own.

The other text, Matthew 13:26, reads, "But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." This is part of a parable which Jesus spake to his disciples; the object of which was to instruct them in regard to his kingdom. He has not, as some have supposed, applied this parable to the peopleing of this world, but he has applied it to his kingdom, which is not of this world. In this parable he says, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." This parable, we think, has a primary application to national Israel, in the type, according to Isaiah 5:1-7, but in its anti-typical design, it is peculiarly applicable to the kingdom of heaven, under the gospel dispensation. The house of Israel, as a vineyard of the Lord, was planted wholly of a right seed, but Israel became amalgamated with the heathen, and, as the degenerate fruit of a strange vine. So in the organization of the gospel church in her visible and external order and ordinances, it was planted wholly of a right seed. John the Baptist, as the harbinger sent before the face of the Messiah, and to make ready a people prepared of the Lord, when he announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, refused to make any ready who did not bring forth fruit meet for repentance. And when the Church was organized on the day of Pentecost, there were no tares among the wheat. They gladly received the word, and were baptized, and added to the church. And they all continued steadfastly in the apostolic doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. These all showed by their fruit that they were the production of pure seed, for they were all of one mind, and they had the mind of Christ. Another evidence of the purity of the wheat we infer from the fact that the Lord was himself the sower, and he never sows any but pure seed. The Lord, we read, added to them daily of such as should be saved. In the early days of the gospel church there was but little apparent encouragement offered to carnal men to identify themselves with the saints; for the persecution raged violently against all who professed to be disciples of Jesus. The exposure to disfranchisement, confiscation, imprisonment, cruel scourging, banishment and death, was not palatable to ungodly men, and it hardly seemed probable in the judgment of men, that the devil would attempt to sow his tares among the Lord's wheat. Like seed in the earth before the blade springs up, the productions of the field are undeveloped. "But when it was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." So in the progress of the gospel

kingdom, in her visible order, the enemy has sown among the wheat, and this has been done while men slept. Darkness suits the workers of iniquity, their works are works of darkness, and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. And darkness, or night, with the saints is the time when they are apt to sleep, or yield to dreams of security, unconscious of what the enemy is about. In baseless fabrications, or delusive dreams, they some times fancy the Lord is bringing in his redeemed, and they talk of great revivals. New instrumentalities are found to be amazingly successful in bringing converts into a religious profession, the church grows as with the corpulency of dropsy, and while men sleep, they dream that this is all gold, silver, and precious stone, and can not be persuaded that it is hay, wood, and stubble.

The converts, when developed by their fruits, prove to be only graceless proselytes, and though like tares among wheat, they may grow among the members of the church of God, they will never bear, or bring forth, fruits unto holiness. They serve to hinder the growth of the wheat, and to produce disorder and confusion in the church, and at last they are destined to be separated from the pure grain, and their end is to be burned. The important lesson taught by this parable seems to be that Christians should not sleep, as do others, but be vigilant, knowing that their adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion; and that it is his policy to corrupt the order of the church by mingling his tares among the wheat, to produce dissensions and disturb the union and fellowship of the people of God.

Again, we are taught that the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a mere habit that may be acquired by association with Christians, for although unregenerated sinners may have a name to live when they are dead, though they may be held nominally in fellowship with the saints, and allowed to participate in the privileges of the church, it will not change them from tares to wheat, nor qualify them to bring forth fruit unto God. Their fruit shall ultimately demonstrate that they are the production, religiously, of vile seed, which an enemy has sown. The church had not been organized long before such tares appeared among the wheat, as, Demas and Alexander mentioned in II Tim. 4, Hymeneus and Philetus, Diotrephes, and an host of Judaizing teachers, of whom Paul said, "I would that they were cutoff." And, we are most solemnly warned that in the last days should come perilous times, when many should come, who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof; and of the sort which creep into houses, and lead captive the silly, etc.; when these tares shall turn away their ears and be turned unto fables. But the church will be more or less infested by this sort until the final separation shall take place, at the end of the world. But to the saints it is consoling to know that the foundation of God doth nevertheless stand fast, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." The separations shall be made under his supervision, and every trembling saint shall be gathered with the wheat, and all the tares shall be bound in bundles, and cast into the fire.

The tares are the only description of religious professors who feel no doubts or fears in regard to their position, while every saint, with fear and trembling, asks every day in secret ejaculations of the soul – Lord, am I thine, or am I not?

Middletown, N. Y.,
February 15, 1863



INVITATIONS OF THE GOSPEL

We have received a communication from the north, over the signature, “A Friend of Truth,” desiring our views in regard to what are called the invitations of the gospel; whether they are addressed indiscriminately to sinners or exclusively to the quickened children of God. We learn from the letter that some of our esteemed brethren are differing seriously on the subject. Such passages as Matthew 11:28-30: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” etc. “Many are called, but few are chosen.” The marriage of the king’s son: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Also the first and eighth of Proverbs. Some brethren take the position that these are invitations to sinners indiscriminately, and others contend that these are invitations addressed only to the children of God.

In giving our views we beg leave to differ, very respectfully, however, from both parties. We deny that there are any invitations, either in the law or gospel, to saints or sinners. We think that a little reflection on the subject will satisfy all honest inquirers after truth that it would be altogether incompatible with the eternal perfections of Jehovah to issue invitations to any of his creatures.

First. We will remark that none of the communications from God to men are anywhere in the Bible called invitations, and it is therefore speculative and idle to argue theologically a position or question which has no scriptural foundation, and therefore, like the endless genealogies and questions about the law, which the apostle warns us against, is only calculated to gender strife, but cannot edify or comfort the family of God.

Second. An invitation is a complimentary request or message from a party having, and claiming to have, no authority to enforce the request, or message, which concedes to the party invited the undisputed right to respectfully decline the invitation, leaving it entirely optional with the party invited to accept or decline without transcending his right.

Third. All who have been brought to a saving knowledge of God will admit that he speaks the word, and it stands fast; he commands and it is done. “Where the word of a king is, there is power,” and God is the King eternal, and the word that proceeds from him shall not return unto him void of the work whereunto he hath sent it. Even the carnal Jews perceived that our Redeemer spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Should the writer of these remarks receive a card of invitation from the president of these States, or from the governor of New York, the fact of its being an invitation guarantees the right to accept or to decline without involving a wrong or a crime in doing either. But should either the president or governor, as chief magistrate of the nation or the State, send an authoritative message to any citizen, summoning him to be or appear at any place, that message would be clothed with all the authority and power of the magistrate from whom it issues; but it could not be regarded as an invitation, because it does not concede to the party to whom it is addressed any right to decline or disobey its authority.

Will any of our brethren contend that when the God of heaven peremptorily says to the seed of Israel, “Seek ye my face,” that they have a right to disobey or regard it only as a mere invitation? If he says to them, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else,” does this imply that the people thus addressed have the same right to decline it as an invitation as to obey it as a sovereign mandate from the throne of God? Since God has commanded men to look to him for salvation, have they a right to look anywhere else for that salvation? If there be any authority implied in the address it destroys the nature of an invitation. Indeed, we cannot, without detraction from a proper sense of the eternal power and majesty of Jehovah, entertain the preposterous idea that he

deals in invitations to any of his creatures in heaven, earth or hell. All his words are big with power and high in authority; he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and submits nothing to the volition of any of his creatures' wills. But in regard to the passages referred to, they bear the impress of his divine authority; they can none of them be disregarded or disobeyed. The passage referred to, Isaiah 45:22, is a sovereign command to the seed of Jacob scattered to the ends of the earth, to look to him for salvation, because he is God, and beside him there is no Savior. All who looked anywhere else, or to any other being, or to themselves, for salvation, were not only guilty of disobedience, but also of idolatry.

The passage, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," etc., is sufficiently clear and explicit. It is addressed to all who labor and are heavy laden, and to no others; and whenever and wherever these words are applied by the eternal Spirit to any poor, laboring, heavy laden sinner, that sinner will as surely come to Jesus as it is sure that the dead will rise when the voice of God calls them forth. The dead neither labor nor are they heavy laden, they slumber unconsciously in their graves; and all men are dead in sin, and as destitute of spiritual vitality until they are quickened by the Spirit, as the body of Lazarus was of natural life before Jesus raised him from the grave. But as soon as a sinner is quickened by the Holy Ghost he becomes a laborer, and is burdened with a heavy weight of guilt, and such are called to Jesus and find rest to their souls in bearing his yoke, which is easy, and his burden, which is light. To take the yoke of Jesus is to come under his law, to be baptized in his name and be yoked together in communion and fellowship with his disciples in all the privileges of the church of God. But are the unregenerated called to be baptized and identify themselves with the church of God? Philip did not so understand it when he said to the eunuch, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." (Acts 8:37) None but believers are called or commanded to be baptized and come under the yoke of Jesus, for they must first be delivered from the yoke of Moses, the yoke of bondage.

In Matthew 20:16, in the conclusion of the parable of the householder and his hired laborers for his vineyard, Jesus used these words: "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." There was murmuring among some of the disciples; the sons of Zebedee desired distinguished places in the kingdom, and some said, "We have forsaken all," etc. What shall we receive? The parable was to rebuke this selfish principle, and to show not only the right of our Lord to choose from the whole company of his called children whom he pleased, to labor in his vineyard, but also to reward them equally. Those who had labored the most or longest were amply rewarded, but Jesus chose to make those who had labored least, equal with those who had borne the heat and toil of the day.

Again, in Matthew 22:14, the same words are used at the end of the parable of the marriage of the king's son. The application was made to the Jewish nation, which had been called as the carnal or fleshly descendants of Abraham, and under the covenant of works. God, by the prophets, had informed them of the approaching marriage. In the type they were bidden to the marriage, but in the election of grace they were not the chosen people of God. As the apostle Paul explains: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Rom. 9:6-8) Although the whole nation of Israel was called in the type, or shadow of good things which were to come, how very few of them were found to be included in the covenant of grace. "Esaias, also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." (Rom. 9:27) "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election [or the few chosen] hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." (Rom. 11:7)

We have not time or space to enlarge on these parables, but it is sufficient for us to demonstrate that there are none called by grace but the chosen people of God, whose salvation is fully secured in our Lord Jesus Christ. “For whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. 8:29,30) In this calling none but the predestinated are called, and all who are called are justified and ultimately glorified. They are saved and called with a holy calling, not according to their works, but according to his own [God’s own] purpose and grace which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began. (II Tim. 1:9) To prove, therefore, that they are the called according to God’s purpose, is to prove that they love God; that all things work together for their good; that they are predestinated to bear the image of the Son of God; that they are justified and glorified in Christ. The passages, therefore, which speak of many being called and but few chosen, do not, nay, they cannot possibly relate to this holy calling in which Christ, the good Shepherd, calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. For in this calling the dead shall hear his voice, and they that hear shall live. (John 5:25) The promise of God is unto “all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:39)

The declaration of Christ to the self-righteous Jews that he had not come to call or save righteous people, but to call sinners to repentance, does not admit of the construction that he had come to call all the sinners of Adam’s race to repentance, for millions of them had already left these mortal shores. The Pharisees upbraided him for associating with publicans and sinners, and he told them that this was his business in the world, to save sinners. The whole did not need a physician, nor did the righteous need one to save and purge them from sin.

The first chapter of Proverbs is also referred to as favoring the doctrine of invitations, etc. But an examination of the Proverbs of Solomon will show that Solomon personifies Wisdom; and Wisdom, we are told, is justified of her children. In a spiritual sense Christ is the Wisdom of God to his children. He is of God made unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But wisdom, abstractly considered, is the opposite of folly and madness. As rational beings, we disobey the maxims or proverbs of wisdom when we transgress her dictates; and wisdom will laugh at us in our calamities, into which we foolishly plunge ourselves, and mock us when our fear cometh. The voice of wisdom is loud in her reproofs when we rush heedlessly into trouble. But the wisdom of God is only known to those who are made wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

Brethren should be careful to avoid any interpretation of the Scriptures which will clash with other plain declarations of the inspired word. We may fail to comprehend or understand some portions of the divine testimony, but our ignorance will not justify us in forcing interpretations which must necessarily conflict with the teachings of the word and the Spirit of the Lord. If our views are right, both the word and the Spirit will harmonize with our views, but if we entertain opinions or views which the Scriptures do not so justify, they must be discarded as wrong and pernicious.

Now, in conclusion, we will reiterate to our legally inclined brethren of the north the appeal which the great apostle to the Gentiles made to the bewitched Galatians: “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:2,3) Review your own experiences, see if in your own salvation you only accepted an invitation and availed yourself of it to secure your acceptance with God, or were you awakened to a sensibility of your guilty, lost and helpless condition by the irresistible and almighty power of God? Was it left optional with you to decide whether you

would live or die, when by the arrows of the Almighty you were arrested and arraigned before the bar of eternal Justice? Why did you there cry, Lord, save, I perish? Why did you not say, Lord, I will accept thy invitation”

Middletown, N. Y.,
March 1, 1863.

ISAIAH 40:20

“He that is so impoverished, that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.”

The propensity of mankind to run into idolatry has not been confined to any period, nation or tribe since the introduction of sin into the world. The depravity of our fallen nature inclines our sinful hearts to pursue whatever is hostile to the principles of holiness and in opposition to God. Man, even in his alienation from God and holiness, is naturally a religious being, irrepressibly inclined to venerate or worship something. The carnal mind being enmity to God, it is not in subjection to his law, neither indeed can it be. Being ignorant of the true God and eternal life, they can have no fear of God before their eyes, and the wild imaginations of their deceitful hearts lead them to claim the right to worship and adore the gods of their own imagination. This principle of idolatry began to be developed in the religion of Cain, the firstborn son of Adam. Destitute of that faith by which his brother offered unto God a more perfect and acceptable offering, he, without regard to divine authority, presumed to offer that which he had obtained from the earth by the labor of his own hands, directed by the judgment of his own depraved mind. As he had neither heart nor desire to unite in the devotions or offerings of faith with his brother Abel, to the true God, as dictated by his Spirit, his offering was dictated by an opposite spirit, to the idol of his vain and wicked imagination, and was therefore a palpable act of idolatry. Such also is the nature of all manner of will-worship in every age; as Christ said to the woman of Samaria, “Ye worship ye know not what,” etc. And to the idolatrous Jews he said, “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men.” Jude says of all false religionists, “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain.” Not only in his way in his partiality for a strange god and an earthly offering of what the true God had not authorized, but also in his persecuting and murderous opposition to the truth as exemplified in his brother and in the offering which he made.

The carnal Israelites, notwithstanding all the temporal deliverances and wonders which the true God had wrought for them, were frequently detected in acts of flagrant idolatry. So strongly was that spirit of will-worship developed in them that not even the dreadful majesty of God displayed at Mount Sinai, with that fiery mount still in their view, could deter them from appropriating their Egyptian spoils to make for them a golden calf, to which they ascribed the glory of their deliverance from the house of bondage. Priest and people were alike involved in the abomination.

In this chapter the prophet proclaims a message of comfort to God's people – a proclamation of pardon, deliverance and salvation from the mouth of the Lord, and calls the cities of Judah to behold their God. Behold him as contrasted with all flesh, which is grass. His glory which fills all heaven with ecstatic rapture, contrasted with the glory or goodliness of man, which fades and withers like the flowers of the field. Behold him also as contrasted with the gods of human production, and of these there is a motley diversity. The rich lavish gold out of the bag: "The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains." But they are not all of them able to provide for themselves gods of gold, or even silver, and the poor must content themselves with less expensive materials. 'He that is so impoverished, that he hath no oblation:" no gold, no silver, nor even brass, or iron, seeks for the most imperishable wood. He "chooseth a tree that will not rot." The poor as well as the rich betray a fixed design to go permanently into their idolatry. If they designed their idols only for a season, they would manifest less anxiety for imperishable materials. On these gods they stake their hope for prosperity in this life, and their expectation for immortality in the world to come; they have no other hope for time or eternity. The poor man, if he cannot vie with his aristocratic neighbor in a costly god, still desires to have one that will last long, for he entertains no fear that he will ever require any other. But poor, deluded wretch, where will he find a tree that will not rot? Even the gold, the silver, the costly stones, monopolized by the wealthy, must perish, decay, and final dissolution is indelibly stamped on all earthly things. Still the search for a tree that will not rot is no more vain or delusive than the hope of salvation from any other than the true and living God. But the poor, deluded idolater makes a selection, chooseth a tree, and as this prophet elsewhere describes his folly, he scores and hews the timber, and with a part of it he kindles a fire, cooks his food and warms himself and exultantly says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire;" and with the residue he maketh himself a god, prostrates himself before it, and worships the works of his own hands. He has not the wisdom or sagacity to reason with himself on the absurdity of his course, or to consider that a part of his god he has burned, but vainly relies on the residue of the same tree to be his god.

But all idolatrous worshipers show a decided preference for a splendid kind of religion. Their idol must be dressed up, and decorated, according to the means commanded by the worshipers. "He seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved." He desires to make his religion as permanent as possible, and the artist is employed to engrave the block of wood with such devices as may indicate the imaginary attributes which the idolater thinks a god should possess, and to make the figure so imposing in appearance as to fascinate the beholder with reverence for it, that it may never be superseded or removed from the position assigned by its maker.

How strikingly illustrative is this description of idol-making of the modern forms of idolatry. Those who know not the true God, in setting up their idols will choose the kind of religion which suits best their own fancy, whether it be Pagan, Mohametan, Papal or Protestant, that kind which they imagine will last the longest, or will not rot, and having chosen their tree they look out next to find an artful, cunning theologian, or priest, or clergyman, who has acquired the honors of the academy or college, and studied the art of theological engraving in some worldly school of divinity, to hew and square, rim and engrave his block so as to make it look as nearly as possible like what the idolater thinks religion should be, and to set up such an imaginary god in and over his religion as he fancies a god ought to be. The more cunning and artful the hireling employed may be, the more flattering, in the eyes of the idolater, is the prospect that his god will not be moved; that it will resist the force of truth, withstand the searching glare of light and defy the omnipotence of divine revelation to remove it.

Not only have the polished graduates of theological schools been employed to make false and fashionable religion permanent, and their idol popular, but they often invoke the aid of kings and

potentates of the earth, and rely upon the arm of human power to establish their god where they choose to place him. The fiery oven of the king of Babylon was but a type of the cruel persecution resorted to by all manner of false religionists and deluded will-worshipers to establish their gods and their idolatry.

One thing is very clear in the history of idolatry in all ages of the world: no system of false religion has ever set up a god that was able to rule or govern its worshipers; all idol gods must act only as they are acted upon. The Arminian's god is supposed to work only by means and instrumentalities; he can absolutely save no one without their consent and cooperation. The modern missionary god can only go to heathen lands as he is carried there by his agents; he has not funds except they be supplied by the liberality of men; no men competent to execute his desires unless they be qualified and furnished by his devotees. He is said to desire to do much, but is overruled, restricted, kept back and retarded by the apathy and covetousness of capitalists on whom he depends. These fashionable gods cannot foreknow, predestinate or do their pleasure (if they have any) either in the armies of heaven or among the inhabitants of earth. But what a contrast! "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God!" How vast the contrast, how amazing the difference! "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd [not be led by his flock], he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." He does not depend on them to carry him, nor leave them to perish in their wanderings, nor to hold on to him, or fall from grace and perish. Yea, he "shall gently lead those that are with young." He will not be led by them, nor by any other beings or influences. It is the God of Zion, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." Well may the prophet, by the word of the Lord, demand, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him?" We know who directs the gods of human production, and who are their counselors; we know who mark out the work, make the calculations, pass their resolutions, and then bid their gods follow up with blessings what they have projected; who tell their gods when to come, where to go, what to do and how to do it. But, "With whom took he [Zion's God] counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" "have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundation of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing: he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." The decree has gone forth from the throne of God, saying, "They shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end."

Then, brethren, lift up the voice with strength, and say to the cities of Judah, Behold thy God.

“This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love;
He shall send down his heavenly power,
And carry us above.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
March 15, 1863.

SOLOMON’S SONG 5:9

“What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?”

It is generally admitted that in this song of songs the pen of inspiration is employed to set forth the glory of Christ and the beauty of his church, under the figure of the beloved and the spouse, the bridegroom and the bride, and the spiritual communications of Christ and the church, their mutual love and heavenly intercourse, which are exemplified, portrayed and illustrated by the strongest, and yet most endearing figures which nature can afford. The frequent use which has been made in various parts of both the Old and New Testaments of the same figure to set forth the union and relationship of Christ and the church, by Isaiah, David, Jeremiah, and nearly all the prophets, by John the Baptist and the apostle John, by Paul, and even by our Saviour himself, are amply sufficient to satisfy all candid inquirers after the truth that Christ and the church are intended in our text by the beloved and the fairest among women. God himself declares that he has espoused the church to himself in righteousness, in faithfulness and in indissoluble union, and by his prophets assures her that her Maker is her husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and her Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called. Throughout this song of songs the relationship, the love, the high appreciation of each other, is strikingly set forth; but in our text the daughters of Jerusalem demand of the spouse wherein her beloved is more than another beloved.

The first important point we will notice is the acknowledged beauty of the spouse, surpassing all other women in her loveliness, and commanding the admiration of all the daughters of Jerusalem: “O thou fairest among women.” We are led to inquire after her incomparable beauty, saying with the amazed daughters, “Return, return, O Shulamite: return, return, that we may look upon thee.” (Song 6:13) And in our investigation let us hear from her own lips what she can say for herself: “I am black,” she says. A color not much admired for beauty; until very recently at least it has been regarded as the very opposite of beauty, and so indeed the spouse herself regards her own color as loathsome, revolting and degrading, and in humble confession she acknowledges that she is as black as the filthy tents of Kedar, because the sun had looked upon her. But this humiliating complexion is only applicable to her as a polluted sinner, as she stands in her earthly relation to an earthly Adam, as a servant of sin, a slave to vice, a guilty, wretched, helpless convict, condemned by the law of God and under sentence of death. In all her nature vile, and as long as her connection with the earth shall endure she is environed by the tents of Kedar, and has to feel the deep mortification of a black and unsightly complexion. It cannot

then be that in her carnal and earthly nature she excels in beauty. But the secret is told when her God informs her that she is comely through the comeliness which he has put upon her.

“Deified and loathsome as we are,
He makes us white, and calls us fair,
Adorns us with a heavenly dress –
His robe of perfect righteousness.”

And then she can say not only that she is in her depraved nature black as the tents of Kedar, but in her Saviour’s righteousness as white and comely as the spotless curtains of Solomon. Now she can greatly rejoice in the Lord, and her soul can be joyful in the God of her salvation, who has clothed her with the garments of salvation, and covered her with the robe of righteousness. Washed and cleansed in the fountain of her Saviour’s blood, purified as gold, refined as silver, beautified and adorned with jewels, her garments are of wrought gold, and she is all glorious within, as she is brought unto the King in raiment of fine needlework, clothed with the sun, and elevated above the moon, and wearing on her head a crown of twelve stars. Well may she now, glorying only in her Beloved, challenge comparison, as she “booketh forth as the morning,” just emerging from the blackness of night, “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” O thou fairest among women! “Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency.” This description of the spouse, we presume, has special reference to her in her gospel organization, and as presented in her primitive faith and order. The daughters of Jerusalem, under the Sinai covenant, like Leah, were tender eyed, who “could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” (II Cor. 3:13) But she is, like Rachel, well favored and beautified, having blessed eyes which can see what kings and prophets have desired to see, but were not able. In the vision which John saw, the bride, the Lamb’s wife, descended from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; to her is well awarded the superlative degree of beauty, as the very fairest among women. Compared with three-score queens and four-score concubines she stands preeminent as the only one of her mother, the chief one of her that bare her, and compared with the richly attired mistress of abominations, who, with her harlot brood of daughters, has intoxicated all the kings and governments of the earth with her fascinating trappings and wanton allurements, how supremely excellent does she appear in her heavenly charms. Compare the two, and although the world has given a verdict in favor of her who sat upon a scarlet covered beast, and reigned over the kings of the earth, and in whose skirts was found the blood of slaughtered millions, how revolting does that devouring vulture appear when contrasted with the harmless dove of our Redeemer; the one a ravenous wolf forever howling for blood, drenching the earth with human gore, whose house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death, the other in angel form of loveliness, breathing only peace on earth and good will toward men; the hideous ugliness of the one is in all respects the opposite of the transcendent loveliness of the other. Not only is the spouse more lovely than the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, but beyond all comparison more beautiful than any of her harlot daughters. Although, as we have admitted, the world may admire antichrist in all her diversified departments above the church of the living God, it is because the world has drunk deeply of the golden cup of her abominations, therefore in their intoxication they love sin and hate holiness. They love all the characteristics of that harlot family, Arminianism, will-worship, hatred, variance, wrath, strifes, seditions, heresies, murders, adultery, thefts, witchcraft, priestcraft, etc., and have no ability to appreciate the glory of the kingdom of Christ. They cannot discover why or wherein the church of God, as organized by our Lord Jesus Christ, is more fair than those who wear the alluring attire of harlots, but this is because none but such as are born again can see the kingdom of God. To the unregenerated,

the women (churches as they profess to be) which reject the gospel of peace, the doctrine and ordinances of God our Saviour, and hold the doctrines of men and the doctrines of devils, who teach for doctrines the commandments of men, with imposing show of Sabbath schools, mission societies, worldly pomp and vain glory, have greater attractions. Neither the Jewish church nor any other religious organization can compare with the church of God in her gospel establishment. She is pronounced the perfection of beauty, and out of her God himself hath shined. For “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.” He is a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her. This constitutes her supreme glory; she never pretended to have any other beauty or superior comeliness.

“Her beauty this, her heavenly dress,
Jesus the Lord, her righteousness.”

Identified with Christ, her Head and Husband, she is a partaker of him, of his divine nature, and she is made the righteousness of God himself in him. She is not only adorned with superlative beauty, but she is in all respects prepared for her Husband. His law is written in her heart, his love is shed abroad in her spirit, his Spirit and his mind are imparted to her, and his image is enstamped on her, and thus she is made the very fairest among women.

But what is her beloved, and wherein or in what particulars does he excel other beloveds? All other religious bodies have their beloveds, to whom they manifest their partiality. The daughters of Jerusalem, under the Levitical priesthood, as wedded to Moses, or the law, had to recognize a husband who was stern and inexorable in his demands, lavish in his curses, and never known to bestow any blessings; always condemning and exposing all their faults, demanding everything, but supplying nothing, and utterly unable to either justify or to give life, with neither ability nor disposition to give them a kid with which to make merry, sternly ruling with an iron rod, demanding perfect, unremitting and perpetual obedience to his every precept, and for the slightest breach or delinquency consigning the convicted to wrath, condemnation and death.

The Beloved of the gospel church is the very opposite in all these particulars. He supplies all, and demands nothing as a condition or consideration. He is merciful to her unrighteousness, and her sins and iniquities he will remember no more. He not only can and has given her eternal life, and pledged his veracity that she shall never perish, but he is himself her righteousness, her sanctification and her redemption. He never curses, but always blesses her. He has made a feast of fat things for her to feast upon, with wines on the lees well refined. He has brought her to the banqueting-house, and his banner over her is love.

But the disparity between her Beloved and the beloved of the daughters of the uncircumcised is still greater. Although all false religionists, or legalists, or what claim to be wedded to the law, in modern parlance are called Arminians, yet Moses, or the law, spurns them, admits no affinity. They cannot approach him without being stoned to death or thrust through with darts. All the diversified daughters or departments of antichrist claim that the Lord Jesus Christ is their beloved, but in works they deny him, and not only in their works, but in their doctrine, order and ordinances, and in their persecution of his people. Like the carnal Israelites, who professed to be looking and waiting for and desiring the coming of the promised Messiah, when the Son of God made his advent it was soon discovered that he was not the Christ they desired. So with all the daughters of the uncircumcised in the present day, they have painted in their vain imaginations that kind of a messiah which would suit their unregenerated hearts, but their imaginations paint such a being as the murderous Jews were looking for, and they have no knowledge, conception or love for such a Christ as God has by his Spirit revealed in the hearts of his

children, and such as the inspired Scriptures testify our Redeemer to be. Some, and perhaps the greater portion of them, describe such an imaginary saviour as has attempted to do more than he can accomplish, who desires greatly to save everybody, has died to redeem everybody alike, has done all that he can to procure the salvation of everybody, but would succeed in saving very few if unaided in the work by the plans, inventions, contributions and activity of men. They portray one who can only go where they carry him, and do only what they do for him. Or, to use their own words, he works by instrumentalities, means, etc., in saving sinners. Thus they attribute to their imaginary Christ the same and no more than the Pagans attributed to their stocks and stones, and they imagine that the Saviour is pleased, and even delighted with them for their zeal in teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and that he is highly honored by the improvements that they have made on his doctrine and ordinances; and, whereas his kingdom was not of this world, they have fixed up what they imagine his kingdom ought to be, and have made it altogether a worldly concern. His kingdom no man without being born again could see, but they have assigned to him a kingdom which is visible to the unregenerate. His kingdom, his religion, his doctrine, were so offensive that he was hated, his religion opposed, and his doctrine controverted and blasphemed by all unrenewed men; they suppose that they have made such improvements that the world admires, loves, and is ready to indorse and defend his kingdom, embrace and commend his religion, support and preach his doctrine, not as set forth in the holy Scriptures, but as improved by their wisdom and adapted to the taste and disposition of unconverted men. The spouse of Christ can confidently claim that her Beloved is a real, full, complete sovereign and almighty Saviour, while all other beloveds are only imaginary. Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges, for they do not claim for their rock the attributes which belong to our Beloved. They do not pretend to believe their beloved is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; that he has all power in heaven and earth; that he doeth his pleasure in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; that he is of one mind, and none can turn him. In all these, and in every divine attribute and eternal excellence, the Beloved of the spouse is more than any other beloved. It is the delightful employment of the spouse to extol and praise her Beloved, and to testify that he is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. She loves to tell how far he excels all others, for he is altogether lovely and the chief among ten thousand. Being filled with his love, she is sick of all other objects, sick of self, sick of the vanities of the world, sick of wandering from him, and can only be cured by the light of his countenance. She says she is sick of love. When one is sick of love, or lovesick, nothing short of the presence and enjoyment of the object of that love can possibly relieve him, and it is certainly so with the church; when mourning the absence of her Beloved there is not another being or object in heaven or earth that will satisfy her. Palaces would be gloomy prisons to her in his absence, but in his presence there is fullness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures forevermore.

Middletown, N. Y.,
April 1, 1863.

CAESAR AND GOD

“And Jesus answering, said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” (Mark 12:17; Matthew 22:2 1; and Luke 20:25)

An appeal has been made to Jesus by certain emissaries of the Pharisees, who, with murderous designs, had taken counsel together as to the most feasible plan for accomplishing his death, had determined to make an effort to draw him into a political antagonism with the secular powers. Having entirely misapprehended the nature of the kingdom which Christ was about to organize, and of the government which was to rest upon his shoulder, they flattered themselves that they could draw from him some expression in regard to the equity and righteousness of the Israelites paying tribute to the Roman government, which could be construed into treason against Caesar. Their plan seemed to be shrewdly conceived to ensnare him. Those messengers from the Pharisees, professing to venerate him as an unbiased and righteous judge, thought, by flattery, to conceal from him their treacherous designs, and to propose a question, the answer of which, if in the affirmative, would excite the prejudice of the Jews, and, if in the negative, would expose him to the charge of treason, and in either case would give his enemies advantage of him. But he knew their wicked thoughts, and exposed their hypocritical designs. The answer which he gave surprised and confounded them.

The importance of the decision of our Lord, in this case, has a much wider application than to those messengers of the Pharisees, or, to those who, in secret conclave, meditated his death. His reply to them is conspicuously registered by no less than three distinguished servants of God, divinely inspired to bear a faithful record, for the instruction of generations in all subsequent ages of the world. Instead then of regarding these words as mere casual remarks, or applicable only to the time and surrounding circumstances of that occasion, we are to regard them as a mandate from the mouth of God, clothed with all the authority of the throne of Jehovah, and binding on the church down to the latest generations of mankind.

To the church of God this mandate is in perfect harmony with the whole volume of divine revelation. Viewed, however, only in the light of an example, the saints should profit by it, and beware of being drawn into the snares of the enemy, who would, if possible, tempt them to mingle politics and religion; or, consent to any union of Church and State. As the Head of his church, he refused to make a political speech, or to define, or decide the vexed questions of the rights, the power, or policy of the kings, rulers, or governments of the nations of the earth. And we are warranted to believe that none but anti-christian ministers can be prevailed upon, in their ministerial capacity, to harangue the citizens of the world on political subjects, nor will the saints as such consent to any amalgamation, nor sustain a ministry thus desecrated. Whether we consider the words at the head of this article as a maxim of divine wisdom, or a mandate of divine authority, we can not disregard it with impunity. As it deserves, therefore, our profound consideration, and obedient conformity, we propose to represent to our readers the line which the scriptures have drawn between the things which legitimately belong to Caesar, and the things which belong to God. We do not mean to admit that Caesar, or any king, potentate, or government of the earth, has any power, dominion, or property, independently of God, or that mortals can possess any thing that does not belong to God; for the earth, and all the fulness thereof are his. All things in heaven and earth, whether they be principalities or powers, thrones or dominions, things visible or invisible, belong to him, and by him consist. But, by the things belonging to Caesar, we understand the things which we, as citizens of the world, are required to concede to human governments.

The apostle informs us that there is no power but of God – that the powers that be are ordained of God – and we can not resist them without resisting an ordinance of God. (I Peter 2:13-21; Titus 4:1; Romans 13:1-8) From this we learn that every constitutional form of human government, domestic, social, or political, God has ordained for the well being of mankind. And what we are to regard as belonging to Caesar, as we take Caesar to denote all the various forms of human government, is authority, power, honor, submission, obedience, tribute, and respect, and all of these to the full extent that we can possibly render due, without yielding to them anything which belongs to God, or that God has reserved to himself in his word. While to honor, respect, and to obey all whom God, in his holy providence, has placed in authority over us as parents, masters, magistrates, kings, or governors, becomes us, and should be done cheerfully, willingly, and heartily, not with eye service, as menpleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. (Col. 3:22,23) ‘having your conversation honest among the Gentiles Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.’ (I Peter 2:12-19)

It is clearly manifest from these words of our Lord, read in connection with the other scriptures named in the preceding remarks, that our Lord forbids that his church, or his disciples, should ever attempt to revolutionize any system of human government under which he, in his divine wisdom and providence, has placed them. Whatever interest it may be proper for them to take in the political affairs of the nation, or government, to which they belong, should be strictly regarded as pertaining to them as citizens of such governments, and not as Christians. The mingling of politics with religion, and Church with State, is alike corrupting and detrimental to both. No church can abide in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship whose faith, or order, is dictated by human legislation, or whose cause is defended by secular power. No human legislation is competent to aid the Son of God in the advancement of his cause, or the building up of his kingdom, for this good reason the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, and no man can see it except he be born of the Spirit; and all earthly kingdoms are natural. Christ’s kingdom is not of this world; all other kingdoms are of this world. Nor is the church of Christ, as such, competent to order or regulate the affairs of earthly kingdoms, or governments, for the children of this world are wiser, in their generations, than the children of light. Not many wise men, according to the wisdom of this world, are called to be disciples of the Redeemer. But few, comparatively, of the members of the church of God possess the elements of statesmanship, for God has designed them for a higher and holier vocation. When, for instance, the first settlers of our eastern colonies tried the experiment of a Church and State policy, no person was to be allowed to enjoy citizenship unless he were adjudged orthodox in the Puritanic faith. The church dictated the laws of the land, and the civil powers executed the decisions of the church, and no man could be expelled from the church but by the axe or halter, unless it were by banishment from the Colonies. Did this arrangement contribute to the purity, or prosperity of either Church or State? Nay, were not both corrupted by the unnatural amalgamation? Let the voice of history proclaim in thunder tones the reply. The torturing, maiming, whipping, drowning, cutting off ears, tongues bored through with red hot irons, incarcerations in prisons, and banishments, etc., all of which was painfully suffered by Baptists, Quakers, Indians, and all whose consciences could not be forced to bend obsequiously to the popular storm. And in what age in the history of mankind has it been otherwise? All the cruel persecutions of the dark ages of Papal or Pagan usurpation are in point,

and in proof of our position. The world has never known a union of Church and State that has not been fatal to the peace and prosperity of both. Hence the wisdom of the rule laid down in the words of our Lord, “Render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and to God the things that belong to God.” To be a good subject to the government of Caesar, or of whatever earthly government our lot may be cast under, does not disqualify us for loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ; but the laws of Christ, as we have shown, enjoin on us that, in all our civil relations, every soul should be in subjection to the higher power, rendering honor, obedience and tribute to whom these are due, and to obey these injunctions, as unto God. Nor does our allegiance and faithful submission to those who are in constitutional authority over us in the flesh, in the least disqualify us for our submission to Christ as our spiritual King, in all the obligations enjoined on us by him in his spiritual government. We can readily perceive that if Christ had authorized his apostles and disciples generally to interfere with the secular governments or the kingdoms of this world or to direct the social and domestic relations of authority and subjection in their various spheres, or, if he had called on Caesar, or any other human power, to aid, protect, or defend his cause and kingdom, that collisions could not have been avoided. Earthly governments transcend their rightful province when they presume to become defenders of the faith, or when they attempt to interfere with the consciences, or religion, of their subjects. No human prince, potentate, or ruler can stand between a man and his God; therefore, the right is inalienable in every human being to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, without let or interference by his fellow man. To his God alone is he amenable as a subject of the divine government. And, on the other hand, although Christ has absolute power over all flesh, and is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, yet in his Headship in his church he refused to interfere with the secular affairs of earthly governments. Nor has he ever allowed his church, as such, to intermeddle with the power or policy of the governments of this world. One of the most prominent and indelible marks of anti-Christ is that she reigns over the kings, or governments of the earth. (Revelations 47:18)

While as Christians, then, we have no supervision of earthly governments. We, as men in the flesh, aside from our religious relations, are required to serve our day and generation like other men. If our lot be – as with us it is or has been – in a republican form of government, in which every citizen (not as a Christian but simply as a citizen) is held responsible in his measure, that is, to the extent, at least, of his vote and personal influence, for the government, he can not excuse himself from that responsibility on the plea that he is a Christian, or a subject of Christ’s kingdom; for neither his christianity nor his allegiance to Christ exempts him from any obligation in the flesh, as a citizen of the State. A consistent Christian may be, and should be, a good statesman; certainly none the worse for being a Christian. And a good loyal citizen of the world may be a most orderly Christian, for he can not be a consistent Christian and a bad citizen.

The saints are called the salt of the earth. Their influence should be of a savory, restraining character. It does not become them to fan the flames of discord which may betray the depravity of poor fallen human nature. “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” He can not be a Christian if he has not that spirit. Having that spirit, his mission is like salt to exert a preserving influence, to be like oil upon the troubled and turbulent waters, not only in restraining his own natural passions, and keeping his own body under, but also in inculcating among his fellow men the principles of “Peace on earth, and good will toward men.” That spirit leads him to do good to all men, as much as in him lies, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

We are now living in the last days, in which the scriptures admonish us that perilous times should come. These are days in which those who profess to be religious overmuch are the most thirsty for the blood of their fellow men; and those who venture ever so modestly to plead for peace on earth and to

walk humbly, and especially to love mercy, are repudiated by the most popular religionists, and those who pray God to forgive, and lay not the sins of those whom we deem our enemies to their charge, must have their names cast out as evil. And if the time has not come when even brethren with whom we have taken sweet counsel together, and in whose company we have walked to the house of God, will deliver us up to be put to death, it is certainly a time in which iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold.

O! how important that Christians should watch and pray, lest they fall into temptations! Especially should Christians guard against every appearance of evil. If the elements around us are dark and stormy, if the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the land, if wars and discords are prevalent among the States and Nations of the earth, may we not enquire if we, like Jonah, may not to some extent be the occasion of the tempest that is beating upon us? May we not ask ourselves, at least, if we have not directly, or indirectly, contributed to the calamities which are now devastating our once happy, happy and prosperous land? Have we duly appreciated our civil, social, and religious privileges when we enjoyed them? Have we been sufficiently humble and thankful for the mercies, temporal and spiritual, which God has showered so profusely upon us in times past?

This is a time, above all others, in which Christian love, humility, forbearance, and faithfulness, should be cherished. We are in the world, and in the world we must have tribulations. But a solemn charge is upon us to keep our garments unspotted. Let us not yield to a worldly spirit, or drink of the golden cup which has intoxicated and maddened the nations of the earth. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, is going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Be not censorious, or bitter, against those who differ in judgment with you, but in meekness instruct them that oppose themselves, if, peradventure, God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. Pray without ceasing, and in all things give thanks to God. Commit to him the keeping of your souls, as unto a faithful Creator. Cast your cares upon him, for he careth for you. Beware of any spirit that tends to alienate you from your brethren in Christ. Always prefer Jerusalem above your chief joys. Endorse nothing in your religious creed for which you have not a "Thus saith the Lord." Reject nothing from your faith or practice on which God has set the stamp of his divine approbation. Search the scriptures diligently, prayerfully, constantly, and anxiously. Denounce nothing as sin that God has not, in his word, disapproved; consent to nothing as good that God, in his word, has not approved. Pray not that God should alter his immutable counsel, but pray rather, "Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven." Say in the language of your Shepherd and Bishop, "Not my will, but thy will be done." Pray in submission to the will of God, for all men, friends and enemies, for kings, rulers, and such as are in authority over you, that ye may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in honesty and godliness, for this is good and acceptable to God our Saviour. As the end of our prayers is that we may live peaceably, we should pray the Lord to rule our rulers, govern our governors, preside over our presidents, and give our Senators virtue and wisdom that they may make and administer good and wholesome laws, not oppressive, but just, righteous, and equal. And while thus we pray for others, see that we ask for no right, privilege or distinction that we are unwilling to accord to all other men. As you would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them. Thus shall ye render to Caesar all that is his due, in tribute, in honor, in obedience, to every constitutional demands. But forget not that our holy religion discriminates, and sets bounds to Caesar's claims, reserving for God the things which belong to God. "Let no man judge you in meats, drinks, holy days, new moons, or sabbaths," – these are matters between each man and his God. These things belong not to Caesar but to God. The three Hebrew children were justified in disobeying the command of the king of Babylon when he ordered them to worship his golden image on the plains of Dura. Our allegiance to God is first, and it embraces every

thing of a spiritual nature. No human power belongs to mortals to dictate our worship, or to restrict our religious liberty. But, as we have shown, this restriction of human power, reserving sacredly to God the government of our consciences, does not disqualify us to discharge every legitimate obligation to all on earth who have authority over us. But should any potentates of the earth demand of us to render to them the things which belong only to God, though our life be at stake, as the children of the living God we are to obey God, rather than man; and he that would save his life shall loose it, but he that will loose his life for Christ's sake, shall find it.

Brethren, fear not him that can kill the body, and afterwards hath no more power; but fear him who hath power to cast both soul and body into hell. Our duty is to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this world, and leave the consequence with God. And we have the blessed assurance if we be cast into the fiery furnace like the three Hebrews, the form of the fourth will be with us, and the fire shall not kindle upon us. Our God can, and will, shut the mouths of devouring lions, and give us that faith that will quench the violence of fire, and in all things overcome the world. But let us be humble, meek, quiet, forbearing, patient, long suffering. Bless them that curse you – pray for them that persecute and spitefully use you. It is but a little while we have to suffer, if suffer we must, and that which is or may be –

“Painful at present, shall cease before long,
And then, O how pleasant the conqueror's song.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
April 15, 1863.

II THESSALONIANS 2

Brother Beebe: – A number of the brethren desire that you would give us your views on II Thessalonians 2, especially on the third, seventh, and eighth verses. What is meant by the words, “Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed,” etc. If it will not crowd out more important matter, we would like to have your views as soon as you can give them.

James Miller

Halcott Centre, N. Y. March 16, 1863

Reply to Brother James Miller, and others, on II Thessalonians 2. – Such views as we have on any part of the divine revelation, we regard as the property of our brethren: or, rather that while sustained by their liberality and fellowship in publishing the “Signs of the Times,” we regard it as our duty, no less than our privilege, to lay before them such views as we have upon the scriptures: not, however, in the vain presumption that we have more light on the scriptures than our brethren have, or that our views are any more reliable than their own, only so far as, on prayerful examination, they shall be established in their judgment by higher authority than our, or any other person's, views. The truth is, if your views are from the Lord, communicated to us by his unerring Spirit, they will be sustained by the scriptures, and also by the spiritual experience of all who are born of God; for the word and the spirit of God always teach and establish the same truth. And nothing is reliable, however plausible or reasonable it may

seem, if it be not established by the word and the spirit of our God. Being so frequently called on by the brethren and friends to express our understanding of portions of the scriptures, it is our desire that all who read our views should be careful to endorse them only so far as they themselves become satisfied that they are according to the standard of our faith, and the inspired rule for our practice.

The chapter proposed for our consideration, and indeed the two epistles in which the subject is embraced, contains a record of things most awfully grand and sublime; and, like all other inspired testimony, vitally important to all who hope for immortality through our Saviour Jesus Christ. The first verse proposed for consideration begins with an admonition against deception and imposition, which implies our liability to be misled: "Let no man deceive you by any means." We are faithfully forewarned that deceivers should come, and that they should wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. And that these deceivers should be *means users*, whose prolific minds should conceive of a great variety of means and instrumentalities; but all of a deceptive character. Hence, the saints are exhorted to be vigilant, to watch and pray, lest they fall into temptation. The solemn instructions and warnings which Christ gave to his disciples in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of Matthew are prefaced by the same admonition: "Take heed that no man deceive you." (Matt. 24:4) A heedless course is attended with danger, for Christ says, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many;" and if possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matt. 24:5 and 24) These deceivers are to come in Christ's name, professing to be commissioned by him, and authorized by his high authority to teach their deceptive doctrines; and some should even claim that they are Christ, or that they have power to save sinners, by the use of their *means*, or otherwise; and Paul tells us that these deceivers exalt themselves above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. It is a prominent mark of modern anti-Christ, that many claim that they are Christ, which name signifies Anointed, and that they are anointed to save sinners by the use of *means*. Christ our Lord declares that he is the Way, and that no man cometh to the Father but by him. These deceivers, in direct contradiction of his words, proclaim that they can conduct sinners to God the Father, who would, but for their labors and *means*, be forever lost, notwithstanding all that Christ has done in the salvation of sinners. How often are they heard to say, "Sinners, I offer you salvation. Come to the altar, or the mourner's bench, kneel down, and do as I tell you, and my soul for yours, if you do not get religion; and getting religion, you have a safe passport to heaven – to the Father." Thus they say that they are themselves saviours; the *means* of saving thousands who otherwise would not be saved. Is not this, in effect, saying, "I am Christ"? Jesus says, "This is life eternal that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." But, do not modern deceivers profess to teach men and children to know the true God, and Jesus Christ? And in this they say they are Christ – they can save. But they go even farther in their blasphemies: They exalt themselves above all that is called God – for they not only profess to be able to procure the salvation of ordinary sinners, but they pretend that they have succeeded in scaring many to repentance, and secured their salvation, after Christ had tried and failed. They say that God has done all he can to secure the salvation of all men, but has failed in many cases. His spirit has been grieved away, and given them up to be lost; but, by the vigorous application of their system of *means*, many such reprobates have been reclaimed and finally delivered from wrath?? Is not this exalting himself above all that is called God? Deceivers of this kind, we are told, should come with all the machinery of *means* and applications, and shall deceive many, and if possible, shall deceive the very elect. But let no man deceive you. No man, if an apostle, or an angel from heaven – a man of good repute, or of evil repute – a learned, or an unlearned man – let the man be who he may, let him profess what he may, there is no distinction to be made. Let no man deceive you by any means. But the saints to whom this admonition is given are

already saints, and therefore saved in Christ Jesus, with an everlasting salvation, and it is not possible they should be deceived on that ground; yet there are other things, not involving their final inheritance in glory, in which they are liable to be grossly and shamefully deceived. These liabilities are clearly pointed out by our Lord in Matthew 24, and in the chapter under consideration. Things which involve their peace and tranquility while here in the flesh, and things which have, and do, and will, involve the saints in trouble by shaking their minds, or confidence, in the truth. Hence, the impressive and pathetic appeal at the commencement of this chapter: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand.” Such deception would, if allowed to, shake the mind of the saints, and that shaking of the mind would produce trouble. And some of the *means* which deceivers would use to produce such shaking and trouble are pointed out by the faithful apostle, as *by spirit*. The very spirit by which the apostles were inspired would be counterfeited. But, as John admonishes, “Try the spirits, whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (I John 4:1) How shall we try them? Here is the true and infallible standard by which to try the spirits: “We are of God.” That is, the apostles are of God: “He that knoweth God, (or has eternal life, which is the same thing) heareth us: (the apostles who speak as inspired by the Holy Ghost). He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” (I John 4:6) These deceivers usually pretend to have a wonderful pious spirit: so loving, so insinuating, and so benevolently inclined for your welfare. This hypocritical pretension of love, piety, and benevolence is exemplified by the wily serpent when displaying his brilliant colors to the unwary bird, bewildered by his artful and deceptive charms, until completely overpowered, he flutters and falls into the devouring Jaws of the cunning adversary. How often have the children of God been enamored by the assumed spirit of deceivers! “O! the lovely man! how musical his voice! how charmingly he preaches! how eloquently he prays! how pathetically he appeals! how lovingly he grasps my hand! how affectionately he takes me by the beard to kiss me! O! How his dear soul overflows with benevolence! and how fondly he loves all who will repose confidence in him! He is so charitable! and....” etc. – But, how does his doctrine accord with that of Paul, of Peter, of James and John? These apostles we know are of God: does he hear them? “Why, no, not exactly: for he received his graceful qualifications in the College, and at the Theological Schools. He speaks in complimentary terms of the old apostles, but he does not think it necessary in our refined age to be quite as hard-mouthed as Paul, who was forever getting into trouble with the people wherever he went; and he thinks the doctrine which the apostles insisted most upon is many centuries behind the present enlightened age.” Well, we detect the errant hypocrite who counterfeits the spirit of the apostles, while he repudiates their doctrine, and discards their instructions, as adapted only to a barbarous age.

“*Or word.*” These deceivers often garble even the words of the apostles, and, like the seven sons of one Sceva (Acts 19:13,16) will talk about that Jesus whom Paul preached, while they know nothing experimentally either of Paul or of Jesus. They will pretend to bring us word from the apostles that they have discovered by their research of the meaning of the apostle’s words, and define them as meaning very different from what the apostles ever taught. They are handling the word of God deceitfully, and turning the truth of God into a lie. We all know how common it is at this day for false teachers to quote the words of Christ and his apostles to prove the very opposite of what they taught, and that which they have forbidden us to believe.

“*Or by ktter.*” Among the means used by anti-Christ to deceive the saints and to involve them in trouble, are letters from the apostles (or purporting to be from them) have been brought forward. Joseph Smith a few years ago pretended to have dug up out of the earth a batch of this kind of letters, and we

have read of several discoveries of the kind said to have been made in distant nations; manuscript letters purported to be from the apostles, and modern spiritualists pretend to have opened a regular mail route through their mediums by which they get just such intelligence as they desire as often as they please. But what does all this amount to? Paul says, “If I, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than what I have preached to you, let him be accursed.” Even if such word or letter came direct from Paul it would not be valid. Away then with all such *means* of deception! And, “Let no man deceive you by any *means*.” “For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.”

The next point to be considered is what we are to understand by “That day.” In the immediate context it is called the *day of Christ*. The gospel dispensation is, undoubtedly, referred to in many parts of the scriptures as the day of Christ, in distinction from the legal dispensation; and we have no doubt the Psalmist referred to it as such when he sang, “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will be glad, and rejoice in it.” And John also, when he said, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” But as the gospel day, the dispensation had already been fully ushered in by the rising of the Son of Righteousness. The apostle could not have referred to it in this subject as a day far distant in the future that could not come until certain other important events should have transpired. Throughout these two epistles to the Thessalonians, Paul speaks of a day in which the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. This day, he says, “Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” The awful grandeur of that coming is expressed in the words written above. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.” And in that day the dead in Christ shall rise. This seems clearly to identify the day intended, as the day in which Christ shall personally descend from heaven to raise the dead, and judge the world in righteousness. It will be a day of perfect and complete triumph: the shout shall announce his triumph over the last enemy. The subjugation of all things shall be put under his feet. Death itself shall be vanquished, and all his boasted trophies of all ages redeemed and recovered – the mediatorial triumph of the Son of God shall be most magnificently celebrated, the trump of God that shakes the heavens and penetrates the deepest tomb shall announce the perfect image of the Son of God forever fixed upon the resurrected bodies of all the redeemed of the Lord. That day is further described in the second epistle, 1:7-10, “When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with all his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that 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; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

This day of the Lord is the principle theme of both these two epistles, and most certainly is the day which is spoken of in our text. But solemn, grand, and glorious as this day of the Lord shall be, according to the divine testimony of the word, it is, nevertheless, a matter of vain speculation with all anti-christian deceivers. They profanely attempt to make capital of it to serve their wicked purposes. By their frantic appeals to the carnal passions of unregenerated men, by painting to their imagination the terrors herein described with a view thereby to alarm and frighten them into a submission to their humanly devised schemes and plans for preparing themselves for a participation with the saints in the glory that shall be revealed in them. Thereby setting aside God’s method of salvation by grace alone, they are leading men to believe that their acceptance with God can result from their own works. Hence the resurrection of the dead and final judgment are favorite themes with all will-worshippers. But instead

of presenting the subject as the apostle has here presented it, for the comfort of the saints, they talk of “uncapping hell”, (to use their own words) in order thereby to scare people into religion, or religion into the people; and, so instead of relying on the redemption which is in Christ Jesus for justification before God, they pervert even the solemnities of the last great day to delude, deceive, and mislead those who relish their delusions.

But this is not all – they even attempt to terrify the saints by their startling announcements from time to time, as that they day of the Lord is at hand. At an early day these exciting predictions began to be made and from time to time they have continued to be made ever since; and even Christians have been troubled to some extent, for they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies. In our early childhood, about the year 1810, we attended a Methodist Watch Meeting to see the old year out, as it was then called. On this occasion the principle deceivers labored to impress the audience that it was very doubtful whether the new year would come in at all. The assembly was in a panic, and some became almost frantic. The preachers represented Christ as pleading with the Father to spare the world one year longer, and he would make some further effort to induce sinners to get religion, and if he failed, he would consent to have the end deferred no longer. And when the midnight hour approached, the minister held his watch and called off the minutes which remained of man’s probation, as it was called. Those who were disposed to meet the Judge in peace had but ten minutes, – nine, – eight, – seven, etc. It seemed to be impressed on many minds that in so many minutes all who failed to get religion would surely be in hell. Many of our readers remember the excitement of the Millerite prophecy which made a great alarm throughout the whole country. But the apostle assures the saints that they are not in darkness that that day should come on them as a thief. And in our subject he gives them to understand that that day shall not come until certain other things shall be accomplished. God is a God of order; his arrangements can not be confused. He has declared the end from the beginning, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” Two very important events were determined – to be accomplished in the fulness of the dispensation of time. The one is the revelation of the man of God, and the other the *man of sin*. The world must continue until both are fully developed. Of the man of God, there is one body, and one spirit, and Christ is the Head of the body, the church, and the church is his body, and the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And when all the members of this body shall come in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, this body shall then become a perfect man, having all its members gathered in and it shall then in revelation attain its full proportions, and reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. This man of God must be fully developed before the end can come; and when this is accomplished, “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.” (I Cor. 15:24)

“Thus shall this moving engine last,
Till all the saints are gather'd in;
Then for the trumpet’s dreadful blast,
To shake it all to dust again.”

Nor is it less important that the man of sin should be revealed. The wheels of time must linger until the cup of iniquity on the part of anti-Christ, is full. For that day shall not come except there come a falling away first. As this declaration is made by the word of the Lord, it is to be regarded as the decree of the immutable God; therefore, it is impossible that the coming of that day should anticipate those events which God has ordained shall precede it. As the man of God is the church in its full stature and measurement of head, body, members, etc., according to the election of grace; so the man of sin is the opposite body in its full proportions, and developments, as the son of perdition. The revelation of the latter involves still another important prediction – to reveal this man of sin there must come a *falling*

away. That is, an apostasy must come from the faith and order of the church of God of many who have been identified with the church in the profession of that faith and order. Hence, we are told in I Tim. 4:1,2, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter days some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron,” etc. And in II Tim. 3:1-7, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away,” etc. All this apostasy and falling away from the true standard of truth and righteousness is required to reveal, or expose fully to view, that monster of iniquity, which is, in our text, and its connection, called the man of sin, that Wicked, the son of perdition, etc., which in the apocalypse is denominated “Mystery Babylon the Great: The Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.” A further description of his characteristics and the manner of his coming is given by our apostle in this connection: He “Opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God.” That is, he opposeth God, and exalteth himself above God. The church, as the man of God, is in submission to the Divine Government, is reconciled to God, and rejoices that the Lord God Omnipotent doth right. But the man of sin, in his revelation, shall be seen in opposition to the government, to the truth, the righteousness, and to the people of God. He is exalting himself by daring to improve upon God’s plan, attempting to annul his laws, set aside his institutions, and changing his ordinances by assuming power and authority which belongs only to God himself. And although they know not God (for to know him is eternal life) yet they admit that there is a being who is called God; but for that being they have no reverence, and there is no fear of God before their eyes; their feet are swift to shed blood, and misery and destruction are in all their ways. They regard him whom they *call God*, as subordinate to themselves! They claim that he can do nothing only through their free-will agency, that he can save nobody only through their instrumentality; that they can move the power that moves the world, etc. Thus the man of sin plants or seats himself in the temple of God by assuming the right to hold spiritual, or ecclesiastical dominion over the consciences of men in all matters of religion, to enjoin what they call orthodoxy, and punish what they call heresy. Thus claiming the sovereign prerogatives of Jehovah, they show, or exhibit, themselves as God; and disallow the existence of any higher God.

That the coming, and revelation, of this child of perdition is under the sovereign controlling power and providence of Jehovah, is certain from the fact that the Spirit has said expressly, ages beforehand, that it shall be: and that the day of the Lord is ordained to the coming of this man of sin. Still, his coming is not by the Spirit of holiness, it depends on no display of the Spirit’s work in regenerating the members of its body. No grace is required to qualify the members of anti-Christ for fellowship or communion in Babylon. All that is required they can do for themselves, aided only in their progress by *the working of Satan*. The development and full manifestation of anti-Christ is effected by the working of Satan, and the works of Satan are such as to call into requisition all his power, which, although very great and astounding, is nevertheless limited by the decree of God. And with his power all his signs, and all lying wonders are ostensibly displayed: for with them he deceives the children of men who have the mark of the beast, and the number of his name, which includes, as we are informed, all who dwell upon the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

His coming is with all signs and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. There is nothing deceptive in righteousness, but all unrighteousness is deceitful and

shall deceive them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth. None of all those who bear the mark of the beast have any love for the truth as it is in Jesus. But they love darkness more than light because their deeds are evil. Nothing exasperates them more than the truth; because it exposes their wickedness; hence, the persecution of the saints by all who perish in all ages from the days of Cain. If they loved the truth they might *be saved*; that is, “That they might be saved from the deception, the signs, and lying wonders of the man of sin;” but as they have not received the love of the truth, and no man ever possessed the love of the truth in a spiritual sense unless he received it from God, by regeneration; all those who have not received it are destined to perish, and to be the dupes of the deceiveableness of unrighteousness. “And for this cause God shall send strong delusion;” for God has reserved to himself the right to choose the delusions of them that perish. See Isaiah 67:4. The delusions shall be so strong that they have neither the power nor disposition to resist; for they love not the truth; they have pleasure in unrighteousness; they are delighted with the signs and lying wonders which rivet their chains, and which hold them in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. These delusions are fatal, these heresies are damnable, and those who drink them in are condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on them. “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” This must be the inevitable destiny of all who love not the truth, and of all who take pleasure in unrighteousness.

All these things must precede the coming of the day of the Lord and the revelation of his supreme glory. “And now,” says the apostle, “ye know what withholdeth: that he may be revealed in his time.” This is the *let*, concerning which our brethren have enquired. A *let* is a barrier, a hindrance, or a withholding, an effectual restraint. And after receiving this instruction from the apostle the matter of the *let* was known to the saints. It is simply this, “That day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” And that man of sin can not be revealed until his time, and this *let* is what withholdeth that he (the man of sin) might be revealed in his time. That is, in the time which God has assigned for his revelation. “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work.” Godliness is a mystery, and so is ungodliness. This Wicked is called Mystery, as well as Babylon, or Confusion. It existed and worked in the days of the apostles but its working was after the working of Satan, and held back by the restraint of Almighty power that it should be revealed in, but not before, his time. “Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” The revelation of that Wicked is a *let* to the coming of the day of the Lord, and shall continue to let until it be taken out of the way, by its revelation in his time; but when God shall fully expose anti-Christ, he will thereby take the *let* out of the way, that it shall no longer obstruct or prevent the subsequent appearing of the great day of the Lord, when he shall be revealed from heaven taking vengeance on them that know not God, who have not received the love of the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. Until the clusters of the vine of the earth are fully ripe there is a *let*, or restraint, which holds back the angel with the sharp sickle. The abominations of the son of perdition must be filled up, the limit set by the God of heaven, for the wickedness of the man of sin must be attained, and the end can not come before. But, the final expositor of that Wicked shall be the removal of the *let*: for, as soon as the full revelation is made, he shall be consumed by the Spirit of the mouth of the Lord, and be destroyed by the brightness of his coming.

As the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, shall be as well for vengeance on the man of sin as for being admired in all them that believe, the unripened state of anti-Christ, no less than the unfinished gathering together unto Christ all his redeemed, must be a *let*, or insuperable barrier to the end of the world. But these two important events will be simultaneously accomplished, and the *let* being removed, the thunderbolts of divine wrath and Almighty vengeance

will be launched, which shall sweep the wicked into hell with all the nations that forget God; and Babylon shall sink like the mill-stone, and trouble the saints of God no more forever.

“But 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. Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle. 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 establish you in every good word and work.”

We have made this article very lengthy. But still we have omitted much which might be said upon the subject involved; and we have given such views as we entertain on the subject, so far as we have dwelt on the subject. What we have written we now submit to the consideration of brother Miller, and the brethren who, with him, desired our views, and to all others who may read this article; and it is, if we know our heart, our desire that it may afford some light and comfort to the humble followers of the Lamb, and redound to the glory of God.

Middletown, N. Y.,
May 1, 1863

I CORINTHIANS 9:27

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

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

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

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

But the question is, In what sense Paul, after preaching to others, could himself be a castaway? We understand him to mean in regard to his usefulness to the saints as a minister of Christ unto them. He tells us in this chapter of his labors and sacrifices in the work of the ministry for the sake of the saints. He had waived his right to be supported by his brethren, and had accommodated himself to the condition and capacity of Jews and Gentiles, to the strong and to the weak, that his labors might be beneficial to them. In all his labors and sacrifices he had conferred not with flesh and blood, he had not pursued a course gratifying to the body, but in fastings oft, in afflictions, stripes and imprisonments oft, he had kept his body under and brought it into subjection, that his ministry might be useful to the saints. Suppose that Paul, while preaching the truth to the people, had indulged the unhallowed propensities of his depraved nature, mingling with scoffers, in rioting, drunkenness, fighting, or in any manner unbecoming his high and holy calling, would not such indulgence of the flesh have lowered him in the esteem and fellowship of his brethren? We have some painful examples of those who preach good, sound Bible doctrine, but their conduct out of the pulpit is such as contradicts the spirit of the

truth which they proclaim. We have heard it said of some that when in the pulpit they never ought to go out, and when out they never ought to be allowed to go in. Christ compares his ministers to salt, but he says, If the salt have lost its savor, it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, or cast away, and trodden under foot of men. When cast away from the fellowship and confidence of the saints their preaching cannot be edifying, and if cast out, the world has no use for them, and they are trodden under foot of men.

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

HEBREWS 6:4-6

“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 unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

The inspired writer of this text had been discoursing on the subject of a progression in the knowledge of divine things in the school of Christ, and under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, through the gifts bestowed upon the church; but he found some of the Hebrew saints who had been so long under Moses as a schoolmaster that they were exceedingly dull to comprehend the perfection of the gospel, for the old schoolmaster, the law, made nothing perfect. Like the pupil in school always studying the alphabet, dwelling on the form and sound of the letters, but never instructed in combining them to spell words or to express sentences, or like children accustomed to be fed on milk, but never having their senses exercised to use meat. The principles or elements of the perfection of the gospel of Christ, such as repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, all these had been set forth in the types of the law and predictions of the prophets, but as the types were only shadows of good things to come, the body or substance being Christ, as set forth in the gospel, therefore he says, leaving the principles of the doctrine which were in the types, as the first rudiments or first lessons given, Let us go on to perfection; like the child in school who, after learning his letters, is exercised in spelling, and from lesson to lesson, until perfected in the use of letters; and as the living child, when sufficiently nurtured on milk, should be fed on stronger food until he is able to digest the strongest meat, so these Hebrew saints, in the a, b, c of their religious instruction, under the law as their schoolmaster, had learned that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins; and as they had been accustomed to offer their sacrifices for sin year by year continually, because the law could make nothing perfect, so they seemed to still cling to the impression that under the gospel new foundations of faith and repentance would still require to be made, and they were dull to comprehend the absolute perfection of the mediatorial work of our High Priest, who by one offering has perfected forever them that are sanctified. The foundation of our faith and repentance, and of eternal salvation, is permanently laid, and “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.” And in demonstration of this plain position he argues the impossibility of any new foundation for salvation; for to lay another foundation would require that Christ should come again in the flesh, be crucified again on the cross,

and so put to open shame. Having once assayed to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and cried on the cross, "It is finished," and ascended in triumph to the skies, believing that he had forever saved his people from their sins, if it should prove possible that his mediatorial work had failed to accomplish what he intended and designed, and he had to come back and do his work over again, this would be a blemish that would put him to an open shame. But observe, the apostle does not intimate that it is possible either for the saints to fall from this foundation already laid, or that it is possible that any new foundation should be laid, but he says, "It is impossible," "if they [the saints] shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance." And to prove the impossibility shows that it would require what is altogether impossible, namely, that Christ should again be crucified, and so put to an open shame. Some, in commenting on this text, have supposed that Paul intended to convey the idea that there was a liability that some of those described may fall away, in order to harmonize their understanding of it with the certain preservation of all the saints in grace to glory, have assumed the position that persons may experience all these things and only be "almost Christians;" but if there be a saint on earth who has any further or additional evidence, we never met with him. Beside the absurdity of being almost a child of God, almost born of God, almost begotten of God; a child of the devil, though almost a child of God; they find no such logic in the Bible. Let us examine these evidences, and if any who read this on examination shall find that they have additional or more reliable evidences, we desire that they will immediately inform us.

"Those who were once enlightened." Are the dead enlightened in regard to spiritual things? tell us, ye that were sometimes darkness. We read that, In him, Christ, was life, and the life was the light of men. Hence light and life are synonymous terms, as used in the text. Those who were once enlightened are those who once were quickened by the light of life and immortality, while all others are held in chains of darkness, having eyes, but see not. The only way in which a sinner can be spiritually enlightened is this: "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."

"And have tasted of the heavenly gift." Christ is the heavenly gift; he is the true bread which God has given for the life of the world; he that eateth of this bread hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

"And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." Is it possible for any to partake of the Holy Ghost who are not born of the Spirit? Is there any other way possible for men to partake of the Holy Ghost? "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Can we then partake of the Holy Ghost, partake of the divine nature, and not be quickened by it? Is not this partaking of the Holy Ghost the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father? Does not this Spirit seal all the children of God as such, and bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God? Are not as many as are led by the Spirit of God the sons of God?

"And have tasted the good word of God." "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Has any sinner ever tasted the good word of God without being quickened by it? Never.

"And the power of the world to come." A foretaste of heaven, the earnest of an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Without being born again we cannot have the faith of the Son of God; without that faith no man can enter within the veil or taste of the power of the world to come. Paul had a taste when he was caught up to the third heaven, but whether he was in the body or out of the body he could not tell.

Now if all these do not constitute reliable evidence that they who have experienced them are the children of God, tell us, ye who know, what more is required? Well, having these indisputable evidences that ye are the children of God, if it were possible that you should lose all this, do you know of anything else that could save you, without involving the preposterous idea that Christ should come again in the flesh, and suffer again, and do all the work of redemption over again? Then the absurd doctrine that sinners can pass from death to life, have all these evidences of a gracious state, fall away, or fall from grace, as it is called, and then get religion again, or be restored to a gracious state, is what this text declares to be simply impossible, and that impossibility he proves by the fact that it would require a second Christ, a second crucifixion, a second redemption, all of which would tarnish the unsullied glory of Christ and put him to an open shame. Arminians may fall from works for want of grace, but for saints to fall from grace for want of works is impossible.

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

II PETER 3:13

The text on which we are requested to write reads thus:

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Not any the less do we look for the fulfillment of the promise of God, because that change and decay are so strongly marked upon all things pertaining to this world. In the context the apostle stirs up the pure minds of the saints by way of remembrance of the words of the holy prophets, and of the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, in which they had been faithfully admonished of the transitory nature of all earthly things, of the great apostasy from the faith that should precede the final dissolution of nature and indicate the near approach of the great day of the Lord, which should surely come suddenly, like a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. How appropriate is the appeal: “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth,” etc. Some writers have supposed that the day of the Lord, in this chapter, was the day when the judgments of the Lord should be executed upon Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, when the old Jewish heavens should be dissolved and all the elements of Judaism should melt away, and that the new heavens and earth which were to succeed was the establishment of the gospel kingdom among the Gentiles. It is very possible that the apostle had some allusion to those events, which were then upon the eve of being fulfilled when this epistle was written. Certain it is that the Jewish heavens and earth, with all their elements, did then pass away, and not one stone was suffered to remain on another. It is also true that that new organization, or gospel kingdom, is one in which dwelleth righteousness, as it is the dwelling-place of Christ, who is our righteousness. But the declarations of the apostle in this case

were prospective and prophetic, not only as to the dissolution of the old heavens and earth, but also in regard to the new heavens and earth, which were to succeed. Although the destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus, was subsequent to the date of this epistle, it must be conceded that the kingdom of Christ was duly organized on the day of Pentecost, some thirty years before Peter wrote this letter. Again, others have supposed that the apostle was here speaking of what is called the millennium, when it is supposed the present condition of the world will be essentially changed, the earth purified by fire, sin banished, Satan bound for a thousand years, and Christ shall reign personally with his saints on earth. But as we know nothing of this theory we must be excused from offering any opinion. To our mind the obvious meaning of the apostle is to stir up the pure minds of the saints in reference to the final destruction of this world, with all its elements and all its works. This day of the Lord is particularly characterized in verse seven as the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. When, according to our understanding of the subject, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and when the dead shall be raised, and all who are, or then shall be, in the graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, when the kingdom of God in its fullness shall be delivered up to God, even the Father, and all the ungodly shall receive their final and everlasting doom and sink down into irretrievable perdition. Whatever grand events may be predicted to transpire before that great day when God shall come to raise the dead and judge the world, should not divert our attention from what God has spoken to us by his inspired servants in relation to the certain coming of that period in which the wheels of nature shall cease their revolutions, when the natural heavens shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shall be folded and be laid away. The solemn grandeur of that day we have no ability to describe. The most sublime language is employed by inspired men; Paul says, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that 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; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." While wicked men and devils may dread the approach of that great day of our God, the saints who love the appearing of their Lord will hail its approach with joy and gladness, looking for and hasting to the coming of it, because "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." (Heb. 9:28) "But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2) While we contemplate the final dissolution of all earthly things, we are not only hasting to, but looking for the event with peculiar joy, for resting upon the promise of our God, who cannot lie, we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The heavens and earth are figuratively used, to signify that happy state to which all the saints shall be brought. The new heavens will not require the glittering scenery of the natural heavens; sun, moon and stars will not be required, for God himself, and the Lamb, are the light and glory of that happy place.

"Its skies are not like earthly skies,
With varied hues of shade and light;
It hath no need of suns to rise,
To dissipate the gloom of night."

The irresistible attractions of the new heavens and earth for which we look are such as earth cannot present. Here we have to use the lamentation of the psalmist: "Woe to me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace;

but when I speak, they are for war.” (Psalms 120:5-7) But these, peace and joy, shall forever reign without intermission or interruption while immortality endures.

“Long nights and darkness dwell below,
With scarce a twinkling ray;
But the bright world to which I go,
Hath everlasting day.”

Sickness and sorrow, pain and death attend us here, but there the inhabitants shall no more say, I am sick. There shall be no death there, mortality shall be swallowed up of life. In this Bochim, or place of weeping, floods of grief gush unbidden from our streaming eyes, but there, “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:16,17) Our present trouble is that this earth is polluted with sin, our own lips are unclean, and we dwell among a people of unclean lips; but in the new heavens and earth to which we go there dwelleth righteousness. Nothing unholy, nothing unrighteous, can enter there. The psalmist said, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” (Psalms 17:15) Upon this glorious prospect the apostle grounds an exhortation: “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” And, “Seeing that all these things [of earth] shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.” None but the children of God have the promise of such things; none but they are looking for such things. God has taught them by his word and Spirit to look within the veil--to look on the things which are not seen, which are eternal, and soon, according to the rich provisions of his grace, shall they all come up out of great tribulation, with garments washed and made white and clean in the blood of the adorable Lamb. Can such a prospect fail to stimulate them to vigilance, to diligence, in the cause of God and truth? To be found of him in peace, not murmuring, fretting or impatient, without spot, unblemished by the spots of the pollutions of the flesh, but crucifying the old man with his affections and lusts, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. He has warned his children to come out of Babylon, to touch not her unclean things, and if we would be found blameless of him at his coming, blameless in our walk and deportment, we should, as we desire his approval, bow to his authority and walk in all his institutions, that we may walk worthy of the high and holy vocation wherewith we are called.

One important consideration in connection with this subject, to which Peter calls attention of the saints, is that before the coming of this day of the Lord, “There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.” And in closing his exhortation in verses seventeen and eighteen, he says, “Ye therefore beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

All the admonitions of the apostles to the saints in regard to the peculiar developments of the last days, treat of the great apostasy which shall in these last days be seen among those who have at least been professors of the faith, and of the great temptations the children of God should encounter, as calculated to shake them in regard to their steadfastness. Who have formerly seemed valiant for the truth begin to show alarming symptoms of instability, and others seem to have tasted the wine of the cup of her who reigns over the kings of the earth, the intoxicating poison of which has maddened the nations of the

earth. The apostle bids us beware. “Touch not; taste not; handle not;” and let him that thinketh that he stands, take heed. And let us, one and all, watch and pray, lest we fall into temptation.

Middletown, N. Y.
June 1, 1863.

RELIABLE EVIDENCE

Dear Brother Beebe – I have thought for some time of writing for the *Signs of the Times* and have made the attempt two or three times, but not finding it convenient to send it to the office immediately, on a subsequent perusal committed it to the flames, which in all probability will be the fate of this.

I have been reading with interest recently in the *Signs of the Times* some calculations in relation to the time of “Slaying the two witnesses,” which may be all very correct. I do not profess to know much about it, but it has been the cause of some reflections which, to my mind, is of more importance to poor fallen, perishing sinners than as to “When these things shall be.” It is to know whether we are prepared for the great result treated on, or whether we are prepared to meet our God. O! solemn thought! Me! a poor sinful reprobate, who was born a sinner, have been but only evil all the time! Yet, some times I hope the Lord, for Christ’s sake, has pardoned my sins; and, ever since that time, if indeed he has extended to me so great a boon, my life has been a life of up and down, *down most of the time*. Am I prepared for that great and awful meeting? Brother Beebe, have we (old fashioned Baptists, I mean) been as prayerful as we should have been? Have we been as circumspect in our walk and conversation? Have we been as devoted to the service of God, and our own best interest, as we have been to Mammon, the peif of this world? Let each of us examine ourselves, and come to judgment in our own cases, and with one voice we would cry, Guilty before God! And be compelled to say, “My punishment, though great, is not as severe as I deserve.” Can we then look for any thing from the Lord but chastisement? Has he not said, if his children neglect his law, and walk not in his statutes, “I will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes.” But then he has said for the comfort of his children, “Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.” He will bring his children off more than conquerors through him that loveth them. Is it not, brother Beebe, a much more important enquiry for us to make, *Am I interested in the atoning blood of the Saviour of sinners, than as to when these things should be?* Could not some of the fathers, Trott, Rittenhouse, Johnson, Power, Owen, or yourself, who write so well, tell us something of the way-marks along the road that leads to heaven and immortal glory, that we poor ignorant stumblers may arrive at some thing of a certainty as to whether we are in the way – whether we have started right – and which is the right road – tell us whether we have an interest there as a son, or a daughter – and whether we will finally rest in his embraces? If our claim to heaven and immortal glory is good, then come wars, come trouble of any kind – come that final dissolution of all things earthly, while we are in the embraces of our blessed Jesus, all is well – for he has all power given him both in heaven and earth, – and he has said, “Father I will that they which thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” Will not

that be enough, to be where Jesus is, and to behold his glory? Brother Beebe, I feel as though to publish this in the *Signs of the Times* will be excluding more interesting matter, therefore, do with it as seemeth good to you, and all will be right with your friend, and I sometimes hope, brother.

A. F. Dudley
Mexico, Missouri

REPLY

Nothing can be of more vital importance to the saints than a reliable evidence of a personal interest in the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ; and next to that evidence that we be found endeavoring to observe all things whatsoever Christ our King has commanded us; as our evidences of acceptance with God through our Lord Jesus Christ can not afford us peace and comfort, if we find not in our hearts a paramount desire to glorify God in our body and spirit, which are his. If we are indeed quickened by the spirit of immortality we can not live without aspirations after holiness; therefore, we have reason to doubt the validity of any evidence of a glorious state in the absence of a hungering and thirsting after righteousness. But while it is enjoined on the saints to examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, and that they add to their 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; it is also most solemnly enjoined on them that they should observe the “signs of the times,” and watch the fulfillment of the declarations of prophecy in regard to what the Spirit hath expressly spoken concerning what shall be developed in the last days, both in regard to the saints, and the revelation of the Man of Sin, the son of perdition. We are not prepared to say that our research for the testimony establishing our personal interest in the grace of God is any more important than our attention to the solemn charge which Christ and his apostles have enjoined upon us to watch the indications of the coming of the day of the Lord, which shall come as a thief in the night. Both are commanded by the same authority. The first we should do, and the other we should not leave undone. “Take heed,” said Jesus, “that no man deceive you.” And Peter exhorts us to be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the “commandments” of us, the apostles of the Lord and Saviour; knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts. Paul also calls attention frequently to the same important charge, “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” But he adds, “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” And he has also admonished the saints to forsake not the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is, but to exhort one another, and so much the more as they should see the day approaching. It is true there are many things said and implied in the figurative language of the book of Revelation, and of the prophet Daniel, and elsewhere, which we may not yet any of us clearly and fully understand; but, should we, therefore, pass them heedlessly? Then for the same reason may we not be excused from searching the scriptures altogether, for who perfectly and fully comprehends any portion of the scriptures? Rather let us, as we feel conscious that we lack wisdom, ask of God, who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not. To many of our most enlightened brethren there seems to be evident indications of the near approach of the termination of the forty and two months of the prophesying of the Lord’s two witnesses in sack-cloth, and of their being slain; and however imperfectly the whole scope of that important subject and its minor details may be understood, it does claim the most profound consideration of all the saints who are looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved,

and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye, being led away with the error of wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
June 15, 1863.

VISIT TO ASSOCIATIONS

Having been absent much of the time for the last six weeks in attending our spring Associations, we are not able to furnish for this number our usual quantity of editorial matter. Our visit to the Associations has been unusually pleasant and refreshing. The Baltimore, Maryland was well attended, and notwithstanding the clamor of war so near to that State, peace and harmony, love and fellowship characterized the meeting throughout. At that meeting we were permitted to grasp the hand of our dear old brother and father in the ministry, Elder S. Trott, who had so recently been incarcerated in a loathsome prison – and who is still a prisoner under parole – having liberty to extend his travels only through the District of Columbia and the city and county of Baltimore. Elder J. Correll also from Juniata Association was present with whom we, for the first, formed an agreeable personal acquaintance. Elders P. Hartwell, D. L. Harding, W. J. Purington, G. W. Slater, E. Rittenhouse, and Win. Grafton were in attendance.

On the following week we attended the Delaware Association at Welsh Tract, Del., where we met with our beloved Elder Thomas Barton, the pastor of Welsh Tract Church. Nearly all the Elders who attended the Baltimore were also at the Delaware, excepting Elders Trott and Purington. This meeting was also a very agreeable and harmonious one. No jarring notes were heard either in the preaching or transaction of business. The attendance was quite as large as usual, and more than ordinary interest seemed to be felt by all present.

The next in order was the Delaware River Association, which was held with the Southampton Church in Bucks County, Pa. Here the same ministers who had attended the Delaware were present, also Elder G. Conklin. There was a larger gathering at this than at the two preceding meetings, and about the same interest manifested. Everything passed off pleasantly, and we parted as we had met – in love and hearty fellowship, being greatly refreshed. The meeting house at Southampton is very large and well suited to accommodate a large gathering of people. The brethren, sisters, also the friends and neighbors at this and at all the other meeting were remarkably kind and attentive to our comfort, and cheerfully contributed to make our visit among them agreeable.

Our own, the Warwick, was the next in course, and was held at the meeting house of the Middletown and Wallkill Church, and like the others, it was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Ministers from abroad in attendance were Elders Hartwell, Harding and Conklin from Delaware River Association; Elder Leonard Cox, Jr., from Maine, Elders Hewitt, Winchel, St. John, and G. W. Slater from the Lexington Association. The time at all these meetings was spent mostly in preaching the word and devotional exercises. It was truly delightful to witness the harmony and fellowship of the brethren, and the manifest interest felt by the congregation generally.

A meeting was held on the next week near New Milford, Susquehanna County, Pa., attended by Elders Conklin, St. John, and Bolch, which we understand, though small, was pleasant. Then came on the Chemung Association at Pleasant Valley, near the Horse Heads, in Chemung County, N. Y., which it was our happy privilege to attend, with Elders Cos, Conklin, St. John, Hewitt, Rector, besides Elders J. Beaman, C. Schoonover, P. W. Doud, and K. Hollister, who live in its bounds. We there enjoyed a precious season, and one that will long be remembered by some who attended.

The Old School Baptist Conference of Western New York, next came off at Riker's Hollow, in Steuben Co., N. Y. It was held on Wednesday and Thursday, 24th and 25th of June. This meeting is composed principally of scattered brethren isolated from the vicinity of any churches of our order, and who seldom have the privilege of hearing the gospel preached in truth and soberness. There is, we believe, but one regularly organized church embraced in this Conference, that of South Dansville, under the pastoral care of Elder N. D. Rector. But the attendance of visiting ministers was unusually large. Ministers in attendance were Elders Hewitt, Smith, Conklin, Cox, St. John, Chatfield, Hill, Bicknell, and Beebe. Four discourses were preached each day, besides some time taken up in general conference, in which many of the brethren spake of the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom and talked of his power.

Our own enjoyment of these meetings, of the greeting of dear brethren in Christ, the harmonious sound of the gospel from those who proclaimed the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the sweet fellowship and tender sympathizing love which seemed to pervade all these meetings which formed so strong and marked a contrast to the spirit which is abroad in the world, made us feel constrained to give this brief statement. Our eyes beheld Jerusalem, a quiet habitation and a secure resting place for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. And we rejoice to know that not one of her stakes shall ever be removed, or one of her cords ever be broken. God himself is in the midst of his Zion; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early.

Middletown, N. Y.,
July 1, 1863.

PSALM 122:6-8

“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.”

In times of war how irrepressibly are our thoughts at times drawn to the contemplation of peace. When in the bitterness of his soul the psalmist cried unto the Lord, saying, “Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.” (Psalms 120:5-7) He said the Lord heard him, and this affords great encouragement to the saints of God to call on the name of the Lord in all their tribulations. The church of God is in a state of conflict, God has chosen her in the furnace of affliction, and he has

ordained that in the world she shall have tribulation; but as Christ has overcome the world, in him the saints shall have peace. Therefore David was glad when they said unto him, “Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.”

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” This admonition to pray for her peace clearly implies, first, that her peace is liable to be interrupted, and second, that God alone can prostrate her enemies, allay her fears and hush to silence every jarring element of strife and disorder, and cause her peace to flow unto her as a river and her tranquillity as the waves of the sea. We may also infer that no treaty that we can make with the enemy, or bulwark we can set up for ourselves, are reliable; that God alone can heal all her maladies, settle all her conflicts and afford her deliverance; and furthermore, we may joyfully infer that the saints in all their conflicts, whether with foes without or foes within, have access unto God, and may come boldly to his throne with their prayers and complaints with a cheerful assurance that he will not send them empty away. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. There is encouragement to pray for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem again, from the consideration that our prayers are in accordance with the will of God; for he has spoken good concerning her, yea, for glorious things are spoken of the city of our God.

Jerusalem, in the type, was the capital of Israel, her throne of power, her palace of government was there established, there stood her temple, and thither went up her chosen tribes to worship. There stood the altar of the Lord on which all her offerings were made; the ark of God was there, and all their interests centered there. So Jerusalem, which is above, which is free, which is the mother of all who are as Isaac was, the children of the promise, is the city of the great King, and her name is called, “The Lord is there.” God has invested her with thrones of power and palaces of joy. He has there set the King upon his holy hill of Zion; there the King shall reign in righteousness, and his princes shall rule in judgment; there shall Christ our King sit upon the throne of his glory, and with his apostles on the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. To the thrones, palaces and powers invested in this Jerusalem every heaven-born soul owes his allegiance, and it is high treason against the King eternal for them to acknowledge any other ecclesiastical power, or submit to any other religious dominion, for there the tribes of the Lord go up. They are not permitted to worship at any other shrine or serve at any other altar. The constancy and chastity of the faithful wedded bride to her Husband is unchangeably binding on her with all her citizens. “This people,” saith God, “have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.” John, in vision, saw her descending from God out of heaven, adorned as a bride prepared for her husband.

To pray earnestly for the peace of Jerusalem, implies an appreciation of her exposure to invasions and assaults from without, and from dissensions, disorders and divisions within. The gates of hell assault her invincible walls, and the powers of darkness vainly attempt to sap her solid foundation. The kings of the earth set themselves, and rulers take counsel against her, the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things, but God has assured her that no weapon formed against her shall prosper, and every tongue that ariseth against her she shall condemn. In the awfully solemn time described by the prophet, when the sinners in Zion are afraid, and fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites, when the heart shall mediate terror, even then the Lord says, “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.” (Isaiah 33:20-22) Impelled by our fears, alarmed by our foes, and encouraged by the gracious promises presented in the word to our faith, we are constrained to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and we offer our prayers to Him in whose power and wisdom, goodness and truth we fully confide, to do for her what we feel conscious we cannot do, and with a firm conviction that these aspirations arise from hearts into which God has poured the spirit of grace and supplication. Nor shall we pray in vain, for, “They shall prosper that love thee.” How many trembling lambs who bleat around the fold of Christ, how many guilt-stricken, conscious sinners cast their longing eyes towards her precious gates and mentally exclaim, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house,” etc., (Psalms 84:1,2,4) while they feel themselves to be but aliens and foreigners, and dare not indulge the hope that they will ever be permitted to enter her peaceful gates or taste a crumb of her provision which her God has abundantly blessed, every pulsation of their fearful heart responds to the words in the same Psalm: “A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness,” but still feel so utterly unworthy to mingle with the citizens of the new Jerusalem that they despairingly conclude there is no hope for them. But is it possible that any can be thus exercised who do not love Jerusalem? From what other source can such desires arise? Certainly they who do not love Jerusalem can behold no loveliness in her, nor can they feel any other attraction drawing them towards her gates but that of love. If there can be any other attraction than that of love, what is it? It is, it must be, love. Cherish then, fearful, doubting, trembling soul, the hope that God has shed abroad the Saviour’s love in thee, and he has promised to prosper thee. Whatever bitter things thou art writing against thyself, this city God has graciously prepared for thee. To all such souls who are ready to take their cross and follow the Lamb, the word of the Lord says unto you, “Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?” “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” They shall prosper that love Jerusalem. Not a single cup of cold water shall be given to one of the least of Christ’s disciples that shall not be rewarded. Prosperity shall not be perhaps, as Job’s friends erroneously supposed, in temporal things, as heaping up gold as the stones of the brook, or silver as the mire of the streets, but it shall be a spiritual prosperity, overruling all things for their good and God’s glory. This pledge embraces all who love Jerusalem, for all who love her love God who founded her, “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.

“Peace be within thy walls.” The walls of Jerusalem not only separate between the citizens and those who are without, but they are intended as a protection to the city which they include. Much is said in the Scriptures of the walls of the city of our God. One prophet proclaims that, “Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks,” and another informs us that God himself is a wall of fire round about Jerusalem, and the glory in her midst, thus at once showing us that God is our salvation. Hence he is called our Refuge, and our Shield. The safety of a city depends upon the strength and invincibility of her fortifications, and so we are taught that nothing can endanger the church so long as God himself retains his power to defend her. Within these impregnable walls a certain class, which are described in the divine record, have a right of citizenship. In Isaiah 26:2, the Maker and Builder of this strong city has given orders, saying, “Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.” While the prophet denominates the citizens of Zion “the righteous nation which keepeth the truth,” and Peter calls them a holy nation, John designates them a blessed people, who “do his

[Christ's] commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." From all of which we learn that those who belong to this city are the chosen, redeemed, regenerated and obedient people of God; and all who love this city have a brithright inheritance within her walls, and heartily pray for her peace and prosperity, and say continually, Peace be within thy walls. They not only pray and desire that God may deliver this city from all foreign invasion without, but also preserve peace within her precincts; that her citizens may love and be at peace with each other, love as brethren, and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; that they may be at peace with God, with one another, and as much as in them lies, live in peace with all men. They desire and pray that they may be enabled to follow after the things that make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another. These peace-loving citizens of Zion are characterized as walking righteously and speaking uprightly, despising the gain of oppression, shaking their hands from holding of bribes, stopping their ears from hearing of blood and shutting their eyes from seeing evil. Such shall dwell on high, their place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given them, and their waters shall be sure, and their eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off. (Isaiah 33:15-18)

"And prosperity within thy palaces." A palace is the place of the royal family, the home of kings and princes, the place of thrones of power and glory; the church of God, the residence of kings and priests, and the home of those whom our God has taken from the dunghill to set them among princes. "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary." Here Jesus reigns, his mediatorial throne is here, and with him, occupying the twelve apostolic thrones, his princes rule in judgment. All the saints desire that the government of Christ may prosper, that upon his own head his crown may flourish, that his horn may be exalted, that as King, Christ may be higher than Agag, and his kingdom higher than the kingdoms of men. Also, they desire that the decisions of the apostles in the judgments which they have recorded on all the laws and ordinances of his church may be duly observed and faithfully obeyed by all the saints, not only for the benefits which each shall derive from the prosperity of the government of the church of God, but for the general benefit of all, collectively.

"For my brethren." The children of my Father, and of Jerusalem, my mother, these are my kindred and brethren, and for their sakes, as well as my own personally, will I now say, "Peace be within thee." We expect this peace will be enjoyed in heaven uninterruptedly, by and by, but even now, for my companions sakes, will I pour out my prayer to God that peace may be within the church and kingdom of our divine Lord and Master. Even now, while Zion is compassed about with enemies, while her citizens are here in the flesh, and subject to a militant state. While earth and hell oppose, and she is in conflict with the world, the flesh and Satan, while noise and discord, strife and carnage spread far and wide around her, and while some of our companions have suffered the loss of all things, and some have been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, whose souls are seen under the altar, waiting to be avenged, and waiting for the filling up of the sufferings of those who remain, and are also to be persecuted and slain, even now, for their sakes, will I say, "Peace be within thee."

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

My soul shall pray for Zion still,
While life and breath remains;
There my best friends, my kindred dwell,
There God, my Saviour, reigns.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
July 15, 1863.

I CORINTHIANS 3:16,17

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

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

This temple of the Lord is holy, for God has consecrated it and set it apart as a habitation of the Spirit; nothing unclean is allowed to enter it. It is a place for worship, a house of prayer. In it God has placed the ark of the covenant, the mercy-seat, the cherubims of glory, the golden pot of manna, the fruit-bearing rod of the priesthood, the golden candlestick, the shewbread and all the holy furniture belonging to his house. Thither the holy tribes of the Lord go up, and here the God of Israel meets his chosen ones and communes with them over the mercy-seat, between the cherubims. It is no light matter then to defile the temple of the Lord. By reference to the types in the ceremonial law we learn in what manner the sanctuary of the Lord was defiled. See Lev. 15:3 1; 20:3; Num. 19:3; Psalms 79:1; Ezek. 5:11; 7:22; 23:38,39; Zeph. 3:4. Those who defiled the sanctuary of the Lord under the Mosaic law were to be put away from the congregation of the Lord, or put to death, and under the gospel

dispensation they are to be destroyed, at least so far as relates to their privileges in the church of God. By a careful reading of the passages referred to above, it will be seen that the Israelites defiled the sanctuary by their own uncleanness, by their contact with things which were unclean, by idolatry, and by a profligate priesthood or ministry. As God's sanctuary was holy, and the Israelite was required to keep his foot when he went into the house of God, so God's church, which is his true or antitypical sanctuary, is a holy and consecrated place, and no spiritual Israelite is allowed to defile it by his own inventions, issues, doctrines, plans or works, nor by holding fellowship with things unclean. There must be a coming out from the world, a separation from Antichrist, and a renouncing of false doctrines, ordinances, and of all religious institutions which are not clearly authorized by the law of Christ. The temple of the Lord is not to be used as a place of merchandise or traffic. When the carnal Jews had made void the law of God by their traditions, they were charged with making God's house of prayer a den of thieves. Their excuses for thus defiling the temple were as plausible as the excuses made by the Pharisees of modern times. The Jews from distant nations were required to bring their offerings to the temple on certain occasions, and as it was inconvenient to bring their oxen, sheep, lambs, kids and doves so great a distance, the pious Jews and accommodating Levites had conceived the idea of having a stock of offerings on hand, which they could supply to the worshipers for a small percentage, and so make the temple-worship more convenient, and the hardship of complying with the divine command more easy; so a market was established in the temple. And as the money to be put into the Lord's treasury ought not to bear the superscription of a Roman prince, it was a great accommodation to the pilgrim Jew to find money-brokers in the temple ready to exchange, for a small discount, their uncurrent funds, so the tables of the money-changers were allowed a place in the temple also. But all these pious pretenses did not avail them when our Lord entered the temple with a scourge of small cords, and drove the traffickers out, and overturned the tables of the money-changers.

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

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

But the solemn warning in our text seems to be given to the saints who belong to the building. They are under a solemn charge, lest they should defile the temple or church of the living God; they are not permitted to bring in anything that defileth; they who bear the vessels of the house of God should have clean hands, and all the members of the church of God are required to put off the shoes from off their

feet for the ground on which they stand is holy. They are to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Their hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water. They are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. They put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, and they are called to walk in all the ordinances of the house of God blameless. Such is the high vocation wherewith they are called.

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” This admonition seems to have reference to their works. Paul says he has laid the foundation, and warns the saints to take heed how they build thereon; for every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. If any man’s works abide (or stand the fiery ordeal) he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. To attempt then to build on this foundation hay, wood and stubble, is to defile the building; but God will try every man’s works by fire, and all that will not stand the test shall be burned, consumed, destroyed. “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.” Yea, and the prophet says he shall sit as refiner’s fire and as fuller’s soap, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

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

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

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 1, 1863.



I THESSALONIANS 5:19

Mr. Beebe: – Please give your views, when convenient, on I Thessalonians 5:19, “Quench not the spirit,” and oblige an enquirer after light.

William Waters
Fallatown, Maryland

REPLY

In view of the perilous times which should come in the last days, and which should surprise the children of darkness like a thief in the night, of which the apostle had been speaking, he takes occasion to admonish the children of the light and of the day to regard to the duties devolving on them as the people of God not to sleep as do others, but to watch and be sober, putting on the breast plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. For, says he, “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.” Having thus clearly discriminated between the living and the dead, the children of light and the children of darkness, he addresses his admonitions to those for whom he says Christ died, and who are not, therefore, appointed to wrath, but who are appointed to salvation by Jesus Christ. In these he recognizes the spirit of Christ. For, “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” To these exclusively these admonitions are given. He does not call on those who never had the spirit of Christ, for they can not quench a spirit which they never had, and of which they have no knowledge. “For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” The church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, who knew their election of God, to whom the gospel had come in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, who had become followers of the apostles, and of the Lord, received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. Such were the saints to whom Paul addressed the words of our text, and to no other description of characters could his faithful admonitions possibly apply.

It is true the persecuting Jews were accused by Stephen of resisting the Spirit as their fathers had done, but not of quenching the Spirit. The carnal Jews had resisted the testimony of the Spirit through the prophets, just in the same manner these Jews were then opposing it in Stephen, by stoning the prophets who spake by the Spirit, as he was then speaking by the same Spirit. But mark, the Spirit was in the prophets, not in the fathers who stoned them; and, Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost, while his murderers were full of the spirit of their father, the devil. So Noah, while the ark was being prepared, by the Spirit preached righteousness to the antedeluvians while they resisted his testimony. But the quenching of the Spirit in the sense of our text is quite another thing. We can not suppose the apostle to mean by the “Spirit” to mean God himself, although God is a Spirit, infinite and eternal; and he is also called figuratively, “A consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:29) But he can not be quenched. No power exists in heaven, earth, or hell that can change him, or divert him from the execution of his sovereign pleasure. “He is of one mind, and none can turn him.” Nor can the Holy Ghost be quenched in any sense by any opposing power; for he is God, doing his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth. Still there is a sense in which Christians may quench the spirit. But what spirit can they quench? We think the experience of all the children of God will explain to them what spirit they may quench, and how. Christ said, “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;” and all who possess that spirit which is born of God are admonished to walk after the spirit, and through it to mortify the deeds of the

flesh. Christians, while here in the flesh, are compound beings – having a spirit which is born of the spirit, and a fleshly nature which is born of the flesh. And these are contrary the one to the other; so that they can not do the things which they would. Either the flesh or the spirit will predominate in them; for there is a constant warfare with them; and they are admonished to cherish the one, and to crucify the other. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.” (See Romans 8) The saints, then, have the spirit of adoption which they have received of God, and by which they are sealed. This is the spirit of life and immortality, and the business of the child of grace is to cherish it, to be governed by it, and not to grieve or quench it. The spirit of the gospel of Christ, of life, in the saints is calculated to warm, enliven, and produce joy in those who are led by it. Its fruits are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law. To yield to the carnal passions and lusts of our fleshly nature is to quench the spirit in the sense of our text. How often do the children of God feel drawn by this spirit in them to speak comfortably to Jerusalem, to visit their closets, to attend to the assembling of themselves together, to visit the widow and the fatherless, but a counter influence of the flesh, which is like water to fire, sets in so strongly that this influence is suppressed, the flesh prevails, and the poor Christian is brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members, and so the spirit is quenched or grieved.

But the admonition applies not only to our personal exercises, but also to our dealings with our brethren and sisters. As fellow members of the body of Christ we are exhorted to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. If we fail to do so, and indulge in unkind expressions or actions towards our brethren, the spirit in them is grieved, and if a disorderly course be long persisted in, the spirit of love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, and faith ultimately becomes so quenched that fellowship is marred, and perhaps broken, for if ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another.

The preceding connection of our text will show how the apostle applies the admonition in regard to our relative obligations one toward another. In verse eleven he says, “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.” This includes all the saints with whom we have intercourse. They all need the kindly offices of each other to comfort and edify, and if this course be not pursued, their spirit is grieved, and the unity of it quenched. And here the apostle imploringly speaks a kind word in behalf of the ministers of the word: “And we beseech you brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” There is a great weight of responsibility resting on them. How is their spirit kindled, enlivened, and comforted when they find their feeble labors appreciated by the saints, and their hands strengthened and held up, as Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses. But when the members become indifferent about attending on their ministry, turn a deaf or indifferent ear to their admonitions, indulge in a fault-finding, and censorious spirit, neglect to look to their temporal comforts, and perhaps ready to join with the world in censuring them for the faithful discharge of their duties in preaching the word, their spirit is grieved, if not quenched, or entirely discouraged. O listen brethren, to an imploring apostle of the Lamb on this subject: *And be at peace among yourselves*. If you are not at peace among yourselves, you can not keep the unity of the spirit. If you indulge your fleshly

passions, jealousy, and prejudices one against another, you will certainly quench the spirit of love and union, “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:30-32) “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly.” That is, them who are not governed by the divine, the gospel rule, the law of Christ, as defined by the apostles, warn them of the sad consequences of their departure from the rule. “Comfort the feeble minded.” Such you will be likely to find among the flock of Jesus. Do not be rash, or impatient with them, because their mind is not so strong as your own; as their minds are feeble, their spirit is easily grieved. Comfort them, support the weak, and be patient towards all men. Impatience does not become Christians, either at home or abroad, in the church, or even in the world. “See that none render evil for evil, unto any man: but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.” The Spirit of Christ in all his saints is a Spirit of peace and good will to all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith, and on no occasion should it be quenched. The Master who came into the world not to destroy men’s lives but to save them, has given us both precept and example to love our enemies, and pray for those who spitefully use and persecute us, and certainly if we do not quench that spirit, by unbridling the violent passions of our carnal nature, we shall use all the influence of our example and Christlike deportment in allaying the madness of the times in which we live. In all the terrible wars which have devastated the earth, and crimsoned the ground with human gore, the spirit of Cain has predominated, and anti-Christ has always developed the same cruel and blood-thirsty spirit which the Jews and Romans betrayed when with wicked hands they nailed our Saviour to the cross. The more thoughtless masses of the people then, as now, were instigated by the maddening appeals of their religious instructors. Through all the dark and dismal ages of Pagan and Papal persecutions, the priesthood led the van. And in the early persecution of Baptists, Quaker, and all other dissenters of our country, the professedly pious Puritans swayed the people and urged them on to deeds of violence and blood. And we can not close our eyes to the fact that in bringing on and prosecuting the present dreadful fratricidal war in our States, the clergy have been the more clamorous of any class for violence and blood. The pulpits of every anti-Christian sect, both North and South, have rang with the most maddening appeals to the worst passions of depraved human nature, lashing them to the most desperate and cruel violence. They have not quenched the spirit, for the Bible assures us that the way or spirit of peace they have never known, for there is no fear of God before their eyes, therefore, their feet are swift to shed blood, and misery and destruction are in all their ways.

But Christians, before they can stain their hands in blood, and join the popular shout of anti-Christ, must quench the spirit of peace and good will which has been implanted in their hearts. Admitting that we have enemies, and that they have wronged us, the command of God is upon us: “See that none render evil for evil to any man.” Vengeance belongs to God, and not to us. He will repay, but our course is clearly pointed out in the examples and precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ. Follow then that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men. Then shall ye, “Rejoice ever more,” and, “Pray without ceasing,” and, “In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning you.” “Quench not the spirit,” this spirit, for it is the spirit of holiness, the Spirit of Christ, of life and immortality. Quench it not – grieve it not – obey its dictates – follow its peaceful instructions, and never forget that, “If any man have not this spirit of Christ,” whatever may be his profession or standing among men, “He is none of his.” When the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus feel disposed to pray for fire to destroy their enemies, they know not what spirit predominates in them. The spirit of grace and supplication from the Lord never led a child of God to pray for or desire the

destruction of his fellow men. What a paradise would men enjoy if all were led by the gentle and loving spirit of Christ! If men would labor as hard to promote each other's welfare and happiness as they now labor to injure and destroy one another! But such is the deep depravity of mankind that we have reason to expect, so far as God permits, that the pot-sherds of the earth will strive with the pot-sherds of the earth, but Christians have a higher, holier, and more blessed calling.

“Blest are the meek, who stand afar
From rage and passion, noise and war;
God will secure their happy state,
And plead their cause against the great.

Blest are the men of peaceful life,
Who quench the coals of growing strife;
They shall be call'd the heirs of bliss,
The sons of God, the God of peace.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
August 15, 1863.

JOHN 1:9

Brother Beebe: – When you have leisure, please give your views on the words, “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” in its connection with the preceding and succeeding verses.

W.F. Kercheval
Hanibal, Mo.,
August 17, 1863.

The Light of which the two Johns (the apostle and the Baptist) bear their concurrent testimony in the text and its connection, is designated as “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” in distinction from all other lights, and in distinction from all the figures, types and images presented in the law and the prophets pointing to it. In the creation of the natural world God said, “Let there be light: and there was light.” “And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.” “And God said, Let there be a firmament,” etc. “And God called the firmament Heaven.” “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.” (Gen. 1:3-6,8,14-16) The first chapter of John makes a direct allusion to the creation of the world, as emblematic of the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, and begins with the same words, “In the beginning.” Moses, in Gen. 1:1, says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” and John 1:1-3, reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made,” from which we learn not simply the fact that

Christ was, at the time of the creation of the natural world, in company with God, as he was ever with God, both before and subsequently to the creation, as one brought up with him, but to us these words imply that the Word which was with God, and which was God, was to be emblematically set forth in the wonderful works of the natural heavens and earth, so that the heavens should declare (Christ as) the glory of God, and the firmament shew forth his handiwork. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." That is, the natural day figuratively speaks of and to the spiritual day. The old heavens and earth are figurative of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and Christ and his kingdom are portrayed in all the wonders of the old creation. So the psalmist says, "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Everything belonging to the creation and organization of the natural world speaks in prophetic language of Christ and his spiritual kingdom. "In them," the psalmist adds, "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. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it." (Psalms 19:2-6) The firmament, which God called heaven, beautifully describes the kingdom of Christ, in which God has placed all the lights which adorn, beautify and illumine the spiritual firmament. The greater light, which represents Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, to rule the day, or gospel dispensation; the law, as a lesser light, to rule the dark or legal dispensation; and the stars also, for signs, seasons, days and years. Stars are emblematic of the gifts which are given in evidence of Christ's exaltation. He gave some prophets for one season, or set of days and years, etc., and some apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers, adapted for signs and seasons, days and years, under the gospel dispensation. So that all the lights in the natural firmament proclaim the spiritual lights with which God lighted up the spiritual firmament of the new world, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In the fourth verse of this first chapter the apostle John says of the Word of God, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." In this verse we not only learn that the light spoken of in our text is life, eternal life, immortality, but also that all mankind are in total darkness, or death, until this life which is light is communicated to them; and the same inspired John says, I John 5:11,12: "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, [or light] and this life [or light] is in his Son. He that hath the Sun, hath life, [or light] and he that hath not the Sun of God, hath not life [or light]." This life which is light is not imparted, or taken out of Christ and put in us, for it cannot be separated from him. The light of the natural sun cannot be separated from the sun and given to us, for if the sun were for a moment taken from the firmament its light would cease and all nature would be at once shrouded in darkness. As we cannot have the light of day without the sun, and as all the light beaming on us does not lessen or diminish the fountain of light in the sun, so neither can we have a single ray of spiritual light only as we have Christ in us the hope of glory, and all the light of immortality poured forth in living floods on all the saints in ages past has not diminished the splendor or fullness of Christ. Paul testifies that He "is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality [or light], dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." (I Tim. 6:15,16) As in the lesser lights of moon and stars, which sparkle in the firmament of the natural heaven, they only shine as they are shined upon by the sun, so in the spiritual world the law, with all its types, the prophets, the apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers, would be lost sight of at once if Christ, the source and fountain of life and light, should cease to supply them with light, for they could be supplied from no other source; he only hath it, none beside him therefore can supply it. How dark was chaos before God commanded the light to shine out of darkness! "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Gen. 1:2,3) So we were once darkness, but now are we light in the Lord. But what a dark

and shapeless mass were we until the Spirit moved on us with quickening power, until God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We do not read that God shined into our hearts, but he shined in our hearts; he first took possession of them and shined in them, and thus he gave us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. But in tracing the analogy of the natural with the spiritual world, we remark that the natural sun had been shining in the firmament of the natural heavens nearly six thousand years before any of the present generation of mankind were illuminated by its light. The reason for this delay is very clear: we could not see the light of the sun until we were born into this world on which it shines, until we entered into the world, and we entered into this world by our natural birth. So until we were born again we could not see the kingdom of God, and this kingdom of God which was invisible to us until we were born again, is the antitype, in this figure, of the natural world. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that fleshly birth qualifies us to see the light of the natural sun; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and this is indispensable to qualify us to comprehend the light of the Sun of Righteousness. 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." "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Now, as we are told positively that only the Spirit of God can know the things of God, and that no man possesses that Spirit until he is born of the Spirit, and that all the things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned, we can see how impossible it is for any one to enjoy the light of immortality until he is born into the spiritual world. God has hidden these things from even the wise and prudent of this natural world, and he has revealed them to babes. We must be born in order to sustain the character of babes, either in nature or grace. By this spiritual birth God's children are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the marvelous light and life of Christ, for as he is our life, so he is our light, for the life was and is the light of men. John the Baptist tells us how the children of the light, who believe on the name of Jesus, came into the world, which is lighted with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. God gives them power to become the sons of God, manifestly, by a spiritual birth. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Here are three negatives crowded into this sentence, with but one affirmative, for the very evident purpose of settling this matter decidedly, effectually and forever, that the birth which alone can bring us into the world of life, light and immortality, of which he speaks, is not of the will or works of men, but exclusively of God. How impossible it is for men in their unregenerated state to know God, or Christ, is still further demonstrated from the fact that he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and yet the world knew him not. Paul says, None of the princes of this world knew him, for if they had known him they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. To know him is eternal life, or true light. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3) When he came unto his own, his own received him not. This is equally true, whether we apply it to his own kindred according to the flesh, his own nation, the Jews, or to those whom the Father had given to him, for no man has ever even felt disposed to receive him as the eternal life and light of the knowledge of the glory of God until this life or light was revealed in him. We know that the Jews did reject him as the promised Messiah for whom they professed to be looking. He was refused by the Jewish builders, but God has made him the head of the corner. So Christians feel disposed to say, also:

"We turned our eyes away,
And treated him with scorn."

We hid, as it were, our faces from him, but when it pleased God to reveal his Son in us, when he, as our life and true Light, took possession of our hearts, how changed was our condition, we were brought out of darkness into the true light, from death to life, from condemnation and wrath into justification, liberty and peace.

Still further, we are told in the context that, “The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” It is not only true that the darkness of the Jews and Gentiles was such when Christ was among them in the flesh that they knew him not, but it is also true that the darkness of our earthly nature is such that where he dwells and shines in his quickened and regenerated people the darkness of our flesh, of our carnal minds, of our reasoning powers of the natural minds, no more comprehend him than the carnal minds of the unregenerate can. This, we conclude, is the reason why the Christian ever doubts or fears. The sensibilities of our fleshly nature demand some evidence of an indwelling immortality, which only the faith of the Son of God can comprehend. The Jews required external signs such as they could comprehend, like loaves and fishes, and things which the wisdom of this world could understand, and so do our reasoning powers of mind struggle for some assurance that is clear and tangible to our fleshly sensibilities, and for the want of such evidence the old man is forever disputing the validity of the Christian’s hope. All our unbelief, all our murmurings, disquietude, rebellion and disobedience arise from our flesh, which wars against the Spirit, and which brings us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members, and show very clearly that the darkness of our fleshly nature has utterly failed to comprehend the light of immortality which dwells in us, for the life which we live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved us, and gave himself for us.

How glorious is the contemplation of this subject; Christ is our life, our light and our salvation. Christ dwells in us, and our life is in him, and he dwells in the bosom of the Father, therefore our life is hid with Christ in God. All the godhead dwells in him bodily, and the saints are one with him, as he is one with the Father.

“Hail sacred union, firm and strong!
How great the grace, how sweet the song,
That worms of earth should ever be
One with incarnate Deity!

One in the tomb, one when he rose,
One when he triumphed o’er his foes,
One when in heaven he took his seat,
While seraphs sung all hell’s defeat.

This sacred tie forbids their fears,
For all he is, or has, is theirs;
With him their head, they stand or fall,
Their life, their surety, and their all.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
September 1, 1863.

LUKE 16:9

Elder Beebe: – Please give your views on Luke 16:9. There is a command given by Christ to make friends with the “mammon of unrighteousness,” and when they fail, these receive them “into everlasting habitations.” Who are they that are to make friends with the “mammon of unrighteousness”? What are the “everlasting habitations”? You will greatly oblige by giving your views on the above mentioned verse.

Phios,
Port Fear
August, 1863.

Mammon, according to Webster, signifies riches, wealth, or the god of riches, and in this signification the term seems to be used in this text, as also in the sermon on the mount. The unjust steward in the parable had charge, so long as he held the stewardship, of his master’s goods, and was empowered legally to appropriate them. He was unjust, first, because he had wasted what he was in duty bound to faithfully take care of, and secondly, in making a fraudulent settlement with his master’s debtors; but he manifested commendable wisdom in so using his office while he held it as to secure the permanent friendship of those on whom he was soon to become dependent. We presume this parable, as well as that of the prodigal son, which immediately preceded it, had a primary reference to the Jewish nation, which was very soon to fail, and lose its nationality, and be removed from its special stewardship of the oracles, covenants, worldly sanctuary, carnal ordinances, etc., but the special admonition to the disciples has a much broader application. God has made his children stewards of so much of the riches, or mammon, of this world as lawfully belongs to us, and Paul says: “Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” God in his wisdom knows and in his providence commits to us the exact amount of worldly wealth of which it is his pleasure to make us stewards, and it is not wrong for us to hold it in charge, as faithful stewards, to be disbursed by us as his word and Spirit shall dictate. But we are restricted as stewards, and solemnly charged to use these things as not abusing them, knowing that their fashion passes away. We really possess nothing independently of God, for the world and the fullness thereof are his, and we ourselves are not our own, we are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.

Now then, as the unjust steward was commended by his lord, in that he acted wisely in disposing of the goods entrusted to him in such a manner as to secure the good will and permanent friendship of those on whom he was so soon to become dependent, so it would have been wise in the Jews to have secured, as far as possible, the friendship of the Gentiles, among whom they were so soon to be dispersed, and on whose favor they were soon to become dependent. And the disciples of Christ should receive from the parable a lesson of wisdom in regard to their stewardship of the riches of this world, and so use the uncertain and transient things of this world as to secure a reciprocity of kindness when they should themselves become poor and destitute. So Jesus taught his disciples on the mount, saying unto them: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.” (Luke 6:38) Our stewardship over and possession of worldly treasures is brief at the best, but we are liable at any and every moment to fail, or to be deprived of it all, and then to become dependent on the charity of those who have the means to relieve our necessities; therefore, as we would that others should do to us, we are told to do even so unto them, that when ye fail, when your stewardship of the things of this world shall fail, and yourselves become needy and destitute, your

deeds of hospitality will be remembered, and your bread cast on the waters shall be gathered after many days.

Perhaps we have our best illustration of this subject in the course pursued by the saints at Pentecost. The persecution was raging against christianity at that time, and all who confessed their faith in Jesus were liable to lose their property, and we are told that all who had possessions sold them and brought the proceeds and laid them down at the feet of the apostles. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (Acts 2:44,45) Thus as their stewardship of their own possessions and goods was to be taken from them, they acted wisely in making provision, while it was their undisputed right to do so, for their future support; that when they failed, or were reduced to dependence, they were received into everlasting or a permanent and reliable home.

We therefore conclude that the mammon of unrighteousness is the wealth or possessions of this world. Mammon not of righteousness, or to those who righteously possess and use them, but mammon of idolatrousness, when unrighteously held, desired or used; that the disciples of Christ were those commanded by him to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that their failing was when they should be deprived of the treasures of this world, and become dependent; that their reception into everlasting habitation is their being received into permanent homes, after the manner of those disciples at Pentecost.

We have thus briefly answered the several interrogatories of "Philos". If what we have written shall be of any use to him and others, we shall have cause for humble gratitude to the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Before dismissing this subject, we feel constrained to call the attention of the saints to some further considerations having a bearing on this subject. In his sermon on the mount, and in the thirteenth verse of this sixteenth chapter of Luke, Jesus distinctly tells his disciples that they cannot serve God and mammon, and by the repetition of this instruction, almost in the same words, in Matthew 6:24, and Luke 16:13, we may infer its weighty importance, and in order that we may clearly understand and duly obey this divine instruction, and at the same time make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, we must carefully mark the difference between the one and the other. It is one thing to make to ourselves friends of the riches or treasures of this world, and quite another to serve them as idols. If, in the providence of God, we are put in possession of earthly treasures, we would make friends of them, we should use them as not abusing them, knowing that their fashion passeth away. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." (I Tim. 4:4) Receiving then with thanksgiving is an acknowledgment that we regard them as the gifts of God, for which we are obligated to thank him and to use them in his fear. But to set our affections on the things of the earth, and forego our religious duties and privileges for their acquisition, and make them the paramount object of our pursuit, is to serve them as a mammon, or idol of unrighteousness. Then they cease to be our friends, but become our idols. The loving apostle John in his last admonition said, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." With such an earthly nature as we possess we need the admonition, for we are informed that covetousness is idolatry. Look to this, brethren and sisters. Have you not sometimes been so eager for obtaining riches as to sacrifice some religious principle for their attainment? Have you at no time absented yourself from the house of prayer, or from some of the solemn feasts of Zion, to serve this mammon? If so, this mammon has, so far, become your master, not your friend; for his servant ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey. Paul charges the saints to avoid the example of Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright. We have precious birthright

privileges in the church of God, which we should not barter away for carnal gratifications, lest we be found servants of the mammon of unrighteousness. Have there not been cases where brethren in comfortable circumstances, and living in the bounds of a gospel church, for the sake of making a little more money, or of accumulating more wealth, have pulled up stakes and moved to some country where they could gain more wealth, but lose all the social privileges of religious society? Do such brethren serve, or make a friend of the mammon of unrighteousness? Brethren, except when compelled by actual want, who relinquish spiritual privileges for worldly gain, forget, or at least neglect, the instruction which Christ gave the disciples in his sermon on the mount: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; ... for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air," etc. (Matt. 6:19,20,21,24-26) We read also to the end of the chapter. Here we have the commentary of our Lord upon the text, and the text also. We do not understand, however, that our Lord commands his servants to be indolent, neglectful or lazy, for Paul commands the saints to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Not serving mammon, but the Lord. By serving him as our Master, and making friends of the good things of this world, which, under his blessing, crown our labors, we shall make the discrimination required: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." These are of the first and highest importance to Christians. "And all these things shall be added unto you." All these things, such as food and raiment, or whatever our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of. Relying on this gracious promise, trust all consequences to him, only see that he is our supreme Master, and he will make these earthly things our friends.

There are many ways in which the fidelity of Christians is tried as to their choice of masters. The poor, the sick, the destitute, the widow, the orphan, ask for our sympathy. The Saviour says, Give to him that asketh. Mammon says, You had better hold on to what you have, you may need it. Which master will you serve? Can you obey both? Jesus says, and you find the saying true, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Again, if we would make friends instead of masters of what is called the mammon or god of unrighteousness, we should regard ourselves as stewards of those things, that they occupy a position of equality with us, inasmuch as both we and they are the creatures and property of God, only temporarily entrusted to our stewardship for a trial of our fidelity; both we and they are our Lord's goods, and if we would have them for our friends, let us so use them that when we fail, or become destitute, those who have shared in our bounty will be ready to reciprocate the favors they have received at our hands. This we will do, not by defrauding our Lord, as the unjust steward did his lord, but by using our stewardship as our Lord has commanded us, by holding all his goods as only entrusted to us, and at all times subject to his order.

Middletown, N. Y.,
September 15, 1863.

ROMANS 13.1

Brother Beebe: – Please give us your views on Romans 13:1. Perhaps you have given them, but no matter. I think it is necessary that the pure minds of the readers should be stirred up by way of remembrance.

John Mesemore
Pancoastburgh, Ohio

REPLY

We feel some little hesitancy in attempting to write at this time upon the text proposed, but, after much reflection, we dare not withhold from an inquiring brother such light as the Lord may give us on any portion of the sacred scriptures. Our hesitancy is not because of any obscurity in the language of the apostle, for the subject appears to be perfectly clear; but from the general agitation of the public mind upon the subject, we have some apprehension that a clear elucidation of the text may not be kindly received by all our readers. We have no disposition to join in the general clamor of the times in regard to the policy or principles of human governments any farther than to consider and urge upon the attention of those who fear the Lord what God has, by the mouth or pen of his inspired servants, said upon those subjects. The text proposed reads thus: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”

There are, at this time, so many conflicting opinions entertained in the world, if not in the church of Christ, in regard to divinely instituted human powers, or earthly governments ordained of God, for a terror to evil doers, and for the protection of the righteous, that we seriously doubt, if the apostle Paul were present in the flesh, whether he could satisfy the minds of all with his own commentary on his own writings. Nevertheless, as we design to treat every man’s opinion with due respect, ask only for a respectful consideration of our own, we shall honestly express our views, and hope they may prove edifying and satisfactory, at least to our inquiring brother.

That human governments are instituted of God for the benefit of mankind we presume none will deny. None can deny this without directly contradicting the declaration of this text: “For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” And the apostle adds, “Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation: for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil,” etc. But, while all this is conceded, the question arises whether the apostle is to be understood to mean that ALL the principalities and powers, and thrones, and dominions, of this world are to be regarded as the ordinance of God, and to be respected and obeyed as legitimately authorized and instituted of God for a terror to evil doers, and the encouragement of good works. If all powers assumed by men are to be so regarded, why was Paul himself so frequently in conflict with the rulers of the people? And why did he say for himself, and for all apostolic Christians, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world;” etc.? Did Paul, with the primitive saints, resist, *wrestle against*, the powers that are ordained of God, and bring on themselves damnation? Did the Hebrew children, when they disobeyed the king of Babylon and disregarded his threats in the plain of Dura, (see Daniel 3:16) transgress an ordinance of God? Did Peter, and the other apostles, transgress an ordinance of God when they refused to obey the rulers of the people? (See Acts 5:29) If they did not transgress the ordinance of God in these cases, we must, of necessity, admit that the powers which, in our text, Paul declares to be of God, means only such power and authority as is legitimately from God. The very word “power” here signifies “authority,” which is derived from God, or which God has

authorized men to bear, for a terror to the wicked, and a protection to the righteous. We must either conclude that all manner of power, civil, religious, physical, or mental, including the power of assassins, or murderers, all that is superior to our own, is to be passively revered and obeyed, or we must find a line drawn some where between legitimate and illegitimate power. Cain usurped a power over Abel, at an early day, but who will contend that it was an ordinance of God? Moses and Aaron resisted the power of Pharaoh; did they resist the ordinance of God? God himself had commanded them to resist.

Well then, the words of our text, “For there is no power but of God,” must mean that God is the only legitimate source of authoritative power, and all pretended right to rule which God has not invested man with is no authority, is but usurpation, and imposition.

But how are we to distinguish between legitimate power invested in rulers by God himself, and that which is only usurped by ambitious and wicked men? We know of no other way than to examine the scriptures to learn what rights of power God has given to men to rule their fellow men. If we have not misread the sacred volume, there are all the different grades of power and authority which are expressed, or implied, in our text.

The right of power invested in Adam to rule over the beast of the field, the fowls of the air, and fishes of the deep, was given him by God himself, according to the scriptures. His right to rule over Eve because she was the bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh, (as well after as before her formation) was immediately from God.

The right of parents to govern their children, and the duty of children to obey their parents, is found in the law of God. And this description of patriarchal government was the supreme rule of human government from Adam to Moses.

The right of masters to rule or govern their servants, and the corresponding obligation to servants to obey their masters, is abundantly taught as an ordinance of God throughout the Old and the New Testaments. And this legitimate power is not only immediately authorized in Leviticus 25:44-46, but distinctly recognized in two precepts of the ten in the Decalogue, and in nearly every epistle of Paul, and Peter in the New Testament.

The duty of citizens to magistrates, governors, and kings is also clearly enjoined in the sacred scriptures. The right by which kings reign, and princes decree judgments, is of God, and those who have not derived their power by his appointment and according to his word, have no other source from whence they can derive a legitimate power, or authority, to reign or govern. And all who have this power, whether it be kings, governors, magistrates, parents, husbands, masters, or whatever degree of power they may be invested with, are restricted by the supreme power and authority of God himself. Parents are forbidden to provoke their children. Husbands are to love their wives, and to impose nothing on them by authority incompatible with the delicacy of their sex. Masters are to render to their servants that which is just and equal, and to remember that they also have a master who will hold them accountable for the exercise of their powers. Magistrates are restricted by the constitution under which they hold their office. Judges are restricted by the laws which they authorized to adjudicate. Governors and kings are to be in subjection to the restrictions which God has defined in his word, for our text, and its connection, informs us that they are God’s ministers, and their authority legitimately extends no farther than to bear the sword so as to be a terror, not to good works, but to evil.

Thus, from the highest to the lowest, from the least to the greatest of all the human family, there is none, not a soul to be found who is not amenable to a higher power, which he can not disregard without

disobeying the ordinances of God. The king who holds the highest position of power or authority over men is subordinate to the King of kings and Lord of lords. “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.” (Psalms 2:10-12) Kings, governors, and magistrates have souls, as well as those in humble positions, and our text enjoins on all who have souls, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, black or white, to be subject to the higher power. Considering the power of all who hold power by Divine authority, such power can not, in any of its departments or grades, be disregarded without disobedience to God. “Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good,” – which God has commanded, – “and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” (Romans 13:3-8) Listen also to the concurring admonition of another apostle of the Lamb: “Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or to governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully,” etc.

Let it be understood that these instructions were given by the apostles to the members of the church of God, that the saints may know how to behave themselves in the house of God, and in all their relations with mankind at large. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world: and our being called by grace into his spiritual kingdom does not annul or dissolve any obligation that we were previously under to the powers that be, and which are ordained and approved of God. A worthy Christian must necessarily be a good citizen, or member of the community; law abiding and circumspect in all things. Therefore as ye would honor God and obey Christ, “Let every soul be subject to the higher power: for there is no power but of God.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
October 15, 1863.



ASSOCIATIONS

In reply to brother Ausmus' inquiry, What is an association? we answer, The word signifies a connection formed of persons or things. When applied to Christians, in a religious sense, we understand it to signify a social band of the disciples of Christ in union, harmony, intimately organized on gospel principles, according to the laws of Christ, for mutual edification, in sweet communion and fellowship one with another. An association of churches is almost anything that the associated parties may make of them. If composed of none but regular and orderly churches, of the same faith and order, and conducted on gospel principles, they are, as brother Ausmus has found some of them, both pleasant and profitable. With Old School Baptists, the design of associations is an extension of acquaintance by Christian correspondence and personal interviews, the promotion of fellowship and the general edification of all who belong to the household of God, and as they are generally held, by mutual agreement of the associated churches, once a year, opportunity is afforded for brotherly intercourse, whereby each may learn of the state and condition of the others, so as to be able to sympathize together, to rejoice with those who do rejoice, and weep with such as weep. At those annual meetings letters from the associated churches are brought by their messengers, setting forth the general prosperity or adverse condition of each church, with such expressions of love, sympathy and fellowship as the churches are pleased to communicate. This is deemed important, not only that each may know of the other's affairs, but also to regulate the intercommunion of the churches. Churches in receiving members from other churches by letter, should know whether such churches are of the same faith and order, as also in dismissing from one to another. As it takes all the members of Christ to make up his one body, so all the branches of the church are required to make up the general assembly of the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. The same immortal life animates all the members of the one body; the same food nourishes, the same hope cheers, the same faith triumphs, in and through them all. For however distant in locality the branches may be spread out from each other, they are the same one Vine; their vigor is from the same root, and their fruit is the same. None of them bear the grapes of Sodom nor the clusters of Gomorrah, but this Vine of which the Father is the husbandman bears the fruits which are unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life. For "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." One church, or branch of the church of Christ, can have no separate interest or independent existence from all the other branches, and all are equally interested in all the affairs of all the fellow-branches.

Much has been said about the independence of churches, of their right to transact their business in their own way, without remonstrance or interference from others. But how is this? Has any portion of the church a right to do wrong, to violate any law or precept of the law of Christ, which is equally binding alike on all the branches of the church of God? If they have, then may they be independent of each other, but such independence at once destroys all fellowship with each other. Our fellowship is based upon identity of faith and practice. In the primitive days they who gladly received the word of the apostles were admitted to baptism and church membership, and they continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship; none were continued in the apostles' fellowship who did not abide in their doctrine. It is no less essential now that Christians and churches should conform to that standard of apostolic rectitude in faith and practice, to secure the common fellowship of the people of God, than at that time, for all orderly Christians are commanded to mark and avoid those who walk disorderly. This includes those who embrace any other doctrine than that which Paul and the other apostles preached, or are governed by any other laws or ordinances than given in the New Testament. We fully agree with our

brother that the church of Christ is the highest ecclesiastical court on earth; and further, we will say she is the only divinely authorized ecclesiastical court on earth. No other court, principality or power on earth has any right to interfere with the discipline of God's house. We would rather have a millstone hanged about our neck, and be cast in the midst of the Atlantic, than fall under the reprobation of the church of God; when she, in her legitimate position, governed by the word and Spirit, utters her decisions, they are binding on earth and ratified in heaven. But here is the point: does the church, in all her several branches, always act in accordance with the word and Spirit of Christ? We are far from adopting the popish doctrine of infallibility. Let it be always remembered that the church is only competent to administer the laws of Christ in the house of God when she occupies apostolic ground, and her enactments and decisions can only meet the divine approbation when they are executed in the Spirit of Christ and according to his laws. It is not, therefore, lording it over God's heritage for any disciple of Christ to repudiate any action of a church, or association of churches, when they have manifestly departed, in their decisions, from the word and from the spirit of the gospel of Christ. In the distinct organization of a branch of the church of God it is fully conceded that such a church, or branch of the church, has full authority to execute the laws and discipline in her own bounds, but with the explicit understanding that she can only act authoritatively when acting according to the divine rule, and this rule is the same in all the departments of Zion, wherever located, and throughout all time.

Associations, in the common acceptation of the term among us, not being an organized branch of the church, do not assemble for the purpose of exercising those prerogatives which belong to the churches as such; but still, to prevent disorder and confusion, they must have the right to withhold their sanction from all that is disorderly and in violation of the law of Christ. Hence when a church which has been recognized in her fellowship manifestly departs from our faith or order, she has, as has every individual Christian, the authority of Christ to drop such church from her recognition as an orderly church in fellowship, and from all, either churches or individual brethren, that walk in disorder, to turn away.

Cases like that mentioned by brother Ausmus sometimes have occurred where churches have become divided, and each party claimed to be the church, and have sent each party their letter to the association, and the duty, however unpleasant or delicate, is forced on the association to decide which, if either party, is walking in the spirit and order of the gospel. In nearly all such cases it is presumable that both parties are, at least to some extent, wrong, and the association should be exceeding cautious how they decide. But when the case is perfectly clear that one party has palpably departed from the order of the gospel, and that the other is contending only for the faith and order of the gospel of Christ, the association has the same power that every individual has to express her fellowship for the orderly brethren and to withhold it from the disorderly. Upon no other principle that we can conceive of can fellowship be maintained among the people of God. If a number of persons, many or few, who have organized as a church, put themselves on their dignity as a church, claim a right to do as they please as an independent church, and refuse to give satisfaction to sister churches in regard to their order, can it be expected that sister churches can continue their walk and fellowship when the erring church is regardless of their approbation? The association of churches, as we have shown, are voluntary assemblages of messengers and brethren from such churches as have professed to be of the same faith and order, and as such, have mutually agreed to associate as long as they can so agree. The undoubted right is reserved to each to retire from the association when they shall see cause for doing so, and the association has the right to drop from her list any church that in her judgment has departed from the faith and order of the gospel. We by no means regard associational compacts as essential to the order of the gospel. Many churches which stand unconnected with other churches in any formal arrangement of association are nevertheless held in bonds of fellowship by the Old School Baptists generally; but these

unassociated churches carry out the same order in dropping from their correspondence and fellowship such churches as in their judgment depart from the faith and practice authorized by the divine rule.

Finally, Christians collectively in churches, or associations, or individually, are required to adhere strictly to the laws and ordinances of the Lord's house, and so long as they walk orderly they have a right to the fellowship of all the children of God, but in no capacity have they the right to violate any of the precepts, nor to depart from any of the examples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is but too true, as our brother has intimated, and most of us have painfully felt, the church is annoyed by ambitious and graceless men, who desire to lord it over the conscience of the children of God, but we cannot see that the nuisance would be at all abated by disbanding all the associations. Many such characters infested the primitive churches and annoyed them, as did the Canaanites the people of Israel in former times; but if our associations are properly regarded they will have a tendency rather to detect and expose such vain and troublesome characters. The Old School Baptists have constantly disclaimed all right or disposition to legislate for or to sit in judgment over the churches. We meet for the worship of God, for Christian correspondence, for social intercourse and sweet communion with those who truly love our Lord Jesus Christ, and are ready and willing to bear his yoke and to learn of him who is meek and lowly.

We have not written our views to prevent other brethren from responding to the inquiries of brother Ausmus, but we do think if ever there was a time when the saints should associate, and correspond, and speak often and lovingly one to another, that time is now upon us. How long we may be permitted to enjoy the privilege, is with the Lord. Many who have formerly enjoyed it are now deprived. May God enable us to use and not abuse the liberty while we may.

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 1, 1863.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

We have been requested to give our views on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in Luke 16:19-31, but have delayed our response for several months, partly because we have been absent much of the time, and closely occupied when at home, but principally because we have no very special light on the parable. Even now we propose only to offer a few general remarks on the subject.

Like most of the parables in the New Testament, we believe this one had a special reference to the covetous Pharisees, who were present when it was spoken. The prophets had foretold of our Redeemer that he would open his mouth in parables, and utter dark sayings, and the evangelist informs us that, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them." (Matt. 13:34) And when the disciples asked him concerning the application of the parables, he told them, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." (Luke 8:10) This parable of the rich man and Lazarus was addressed to the Pharisees, and was doubtless intended to apply to them. Jesus had been speaking a parable to his disciples of the unjust steward, in the presence and hearing of the Pharisees. And it is said, verse 14, "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous,

heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.” He then told them that the law and the prophets were until John, but now the kingdom of God is preached, and all men (Gentiles) press into it, and the impossibility of justification on an imperfect obedience to the law, and illustrated by the law of marriage, and then added the parable under consideration, all of which was addressed immediately to the Pharisees. We therefore understand that the Pharisees were the certain rich man in the parable. They were clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. They claimed to be exceeding rich in the works of the law, in self-righteousness, in ability to secure the favor of God. They prided themselves greatly in being the children of Abraham, never in bondage to any man; disdain the idea of being saved by the imputed righteousness of Christ, as they had so much of their own. They claimed to have the covenants; to them had been given the law, and they lived as sumptuously on their own righteousness as their descendants, the Arminians of our day, do at the present time. Like the rich man in the parable, they were covetous, unwilling that publicans, sinners or Gentiles should feast with them. Although possessing so much, not even the crumbs wasted at their banquet would they allow to be given to publicans and sinners at their gate. Circumcision and the law with its ceremonies, carnal ordinances and divers washings, were the wall of partition between them and sinners, who could not be admitted through their gates. The pitiful condition of Lazarus, hungry and sore, wretched and perishing, excited no compassion, he was left to the brutal kindness of the dogs.

Lazarus, in the parable, must represent those poor, perishing Gentiles and Samaritans, publicans and harlots which were shut out from the privileges of Judaism, who could not be justified by the law of Moses, and who were treated with contempt by the Jews.

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,” etc. The time of these deaths seems to have been indicated in the context, when the kingdom of God began to be preached by John, and all men pressed into it. The term of Lazarus’ existence in degradation expired at the opening up of the gospel dispensation, in which lost, helpless, sick and sore, wretched, hopeless and dying sinners were to come from the east, west, north and south, and with publicans and harlots sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the children of the kingdom, the carnal seed of Abraham be cast out.

When the middle wall of partition was abolished, and when the hour arrived in which the true worshipers of God should no more worship at Jerusalem, nor at the mountain of Samaria, but in spirit and in truth; when he should no longer be a Jew who was one outwardly, nor that circumcision which was outward in the flesh, then died the rich man, and he was buried. But Lazarus, or those who are ready to perish from the land of Assyria, and the outcasts from Egypt, came to worship the Lord in his holy mount at Jerusalem; not the old Jerusalem which was in bondage with her children, but the Jerusalem which is above and free, which is the mother of all those who are of the faith of Abraham. If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Now their conditions are changed. The rich man’s house is demolished, his sumptuous fare is discontinued, his days of luxury are numbered, he dies with the expiration of the ceremonial dispensation, is soon buried in pagan idolatry and engulfed in Gentile nations. In hell he lifted up his eyes. Hell sometimes means the grave, or repository of the dead; it also means darkness and torments, etc. It is here used figuratively as a part of the parable, and signifies the rejected state of the carnal Jews, who, like their cities which had been exalted to heaven, were cast down to hell. The Pharisees are

thus tormented, and having been only Abraham's children after the flesh, are now cast forth from his embrace, while those who are born of God are by angels (messengers) carried to Abraham's bosom, and are blessed with faithful Abraham.

The carnal Jews are now nationally dead, scattered and buried among the Gentiles, but from their place of torment they see the Gentile church, borne by the apostles, in the doctrine of the gospel, to the bosom of Abraham, and comforted, while they are destitute of even a drop of consolation from the Lord by prophets or apostles to cool their parching tongues. Vainly now they cry unto Abraham to relieve them, by an acknowledgment of their fleshly descent from his loins. This he acknowledges by recognizing this rich man as his son, but says he can do nothing for them, as their day of exultation has expired by the abrogation of the covenant of works, and, like John the Baptist, he tells them to "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." The plea of the rich man for a missionary arrangement cannot be entertained by Abraham, as the faith of Abraham cannot admit that missionaries sent from the dead will be more efficient than was Moses and the prophets whom the carnal Jews had been amply supplied with, and which the five brethren (who probably represent all the Pharisees or legalists of subsequent ages, including the present time,) still profess to adhere to. None but those who are born of God can have the faith of Abraham, and without that faith they cannot understand the spirituality of the law or the prophets; and should one arise from the dead, he could not make them wise unto salvation. In confirmation of the testimony of Abraham in the parable, the history of all the missionaries sent from the dead, or of dead missionaries from the apostolic age, has utterly failed to convince Arminian legalists of the fatal delusion they are under, as there is a great and impassable gulf fixed between those who are born of the flesh and those who are born of the Spirit, which effectually and forever cuts off all communication between the parties.

Middletown, N. Y.,
November 15, 1863.

MORE ON ASSOCIATIONS

Remarks on Elder Blakeslee's Letter

It is not our desire or intention, either by special or common pleadings, to encourage a controversy on the subject of Associations, as, to our mind, there are many other subjects at this peculiarly trying time of vastly greater importance to the peace, comfort and edification of the people of God, which claim our columns. Especially should we regret to enter the list with a veteran of the cross whom we so highly esteem as our brother Blakeslee. Indeed, had he confined his remarks to the issue, as stated and defined by himself in the closing portion of his article, there would probably have been no room for controversy, but the principal part of his letter is confined to the extravagant proceedings of two New School Baptist associations, which probably all but New School Baptists would blush to be concerned in. Now, in justice to the Old School Baptists, it should be known that no such high-handed proceedings have ever been tolerated among them.

In our reply to brother Ausmus we stated that an association of churches maybe anything the associated parties choose to make of them. We admit that brother Blakeslee has given two sad examples of the prostitution of the name, but we cannot perceive that he has even attempted to show that all associations of churches are unscriptural. He says the question at issue is not whether they have been productive of more good than evil, neither is it, we presume, whether there have been instances in which they have been perverted to be the most outrageous instruments of tyranny and oppression. We presume that the question of brother Ausmus related only to associations of churches as they are recognized by the Old School Baptists. Two questions seem to us to be involved: first, Do the Scriptures warrant any association of gospel churches for any purpose whatever? Second, If they do, are ours such as the Scriptures sanction? If, by a careful and prayerful searching of the Scriptures, we find that the primitive churches did associate together, then we have clearly authority for them by apostolic example, and however much wicked men may pervert them, the example of the primitive churches cannot be thereby invalidated. The pattern and example of primitive saints associating in churches is admitted by brother Blakeslee, although it is known to him that there are very many religious organizations called churches whose practice is as grossly antichristian as that of the two associations instanced by him.

The primitive Christians and churches either did or did not, under the direction of the apostles, associate together. We assume that they did, as individual Christians, associate in church relation, and, as churches, so far as to recognize, correspond, and, so far as practicable, unite together for social devotion and for mutual advice and edification, while none were allowed to lord it over God's heritage. Without any kind of association there could be no union, sympathy or identity; but we have palpable evidence that the apostolic churches did maintain a correspondence with each other, and their members met together in such harmony for the worship of God whenever they found opportunity, without regard to what particular branches of the church they belonged. This is evident from the fact that Timothy and Titus, though pastors (or bishops) of particular churches had a charge to ordain elders and attend to other services in sister churches. All the churches of Galatia were addressed as one community, or association of churches, in one epistle written to them by Paul. Messengers were sometimes sent from one church, or churches, to another church of the same faith and order. It would be difficult to find an instance where Christians or churches of the primitive faith and order ever refused to associate together when favored with opportunity because they were members of different branches of the church of Christ. It is not our impression that the churches of the apostles' day were as formal in their distinct organization as they are now, but where two or three were gathered together in Christ's name, there Christ himself was in their midst; and if, as at Pentecost, the number were increased to thousands, they were still of one heart and one mind. Hence we read of "the church in thy house," as well as the church in a city or nation.

None of the branches of the church of Christ can any more be independent of the other branches than any one member of a natural body can be independent of its fellow-members. The hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee, nor the eye to the ear. Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." This figure seems to represent the perfect vine as embracing all the branches which have grown out of it, and all alike invigorated and made fruitful by their common relation to the whole vine. A still stronger figure is used by the apostle, I Cor. 12:12,13: "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. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The same apostle also in Ephesians 4 dwells largely

on the vital and inseparable unity and fellowship of all the saints at Ephesus, and all the faithful in Christ Jesus, whether they may be: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all;” and in the twenty-fifth verse he adds, “For we are members one of another.” Now can such identity and vital union exist without association, without harmony of action? Can one member be independent, or have no need of all the other members? Can the foot travel on and leave all or any of its fellow-members behind? Can all these members, which make up the perfect and complete body of Christ, being many, keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and yet hold no correspondence or association together? We presume brother Blakeslee will not assume that they can. But still the inquiry returns, Do all these Scriptures justify the association of churches in the manner in which they are held by the Old School Baptists of our day? The affirmative or negative response must depend on how they are held or practiced by the Old School Baptists. It is more than possible that some of our Old School Baptist associations may practice some things which are not justified by the law of Christ. We would all do well to look to this. Brother Blakeslee found in the New School Baptist associations which he has referred to, legislative, judicial and executive” powers assumed, none of which have we ever found in any of our Old School Baptist associations. Neither the churches, nor even the apostles, were ever invested with legislative power. Christ has made all the laws his kingdom can ever require. The apostles are enthroned in the church to judge the twelve tribes, but not to make any new laws; nor has the church any judicial or executive power beyond that of strict obedience to the laws of Christ as adjudged and defined by the inspired apostles. In obedience to Christ’s laws, as expounded by the apostles, the church, and every member thereof, whether individually or associated, are required to withhold that fellowship from the hidden works of darkness, and to withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly. But the rule of order by which the extension or suspension of fellowship is to be regulated is the law of Christ. Those unassociated churches in the north and northwestern part of this State are only unassociated in form; that is, they reject the name and formalities of associations, because, as we presume, they became so disgusted with the abominations which they have witnessed in the associations in their vicinity that they are jealous of all formal associations; but they are in reality associated in a form of their own, which they consider less objectionable. It is common with them to hold yearly meetings, at which brethren and sisters and Elders come together for social worship and mutual correspondence, and, for aught we could perceive, they really associate freely by meeting and greeting each other in the love and fellowship of the gospel, and they appear to be as fond of associating in their way as those who organize for conducting a more general correspondence with the churches and associations scattered abroad. Our ministering brethren from that vicinity also occasionally visit our associations and associate with us, and we hope enjoy the seasons with us. Now we do not wish to be understood as advocating any of the excesses or abominations which prevail among the New School order, which are complained of by brother Blakeslee, but we wish to discriminate between a Christian and an antichristian association. There is something social in the very spirit of Christianity which should be cherished by all who can appreciate it. “Let brotherly love continue.” “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.” These injunctions are not restricted to organized branches of the church of God, but they are addressed to the whole brotherhood, and we believe if ever there was a time when they that fear the Lord should meet frequently and speak often one to another, that time is now. Some have objected to associations because they drop from their connection such churches and associations as they believe have departed from the faith. But do not the unassociated churches do the same? And are not the brethren individually required to do the same? “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” When churches depart manifestly from the faith and order on which our fellowship is based, we are bound,

individually and collectively, to withhold from them our fellowship, or recognition, until they return to the order of the house of God. Indeed, we are greatly mistaken if we have not witnessed great evils growing out of the oft reiterated cry of the independence of churches. How far is a church independent? It is simply this: A church of Christ in gospel order, governed only by the word and spirit of the gospel, has authority to discipline her own members without interference from any other organized body, court or council on earth, and her decisions are entitled to be respected by all other churches. But churches, as well as individuals and associations, are liable to err, both in the spirit and letter, and in such cases she has no right to drag other churches or individuals into any disorder or heresy whatever; and any church who feels a consciousness that she has acted in the fear of the Lord, been governed in her actions by the divine rule, will rather court than shun investigation. She will frankly say, Come and behold our order; for if she is governed by the spirit of the gospel she will desire to secure the confidence and fellowship of all her sister churches. We always regard it as a suspicious circumstance when churches, ministers or other individual members put themselves upon their dignity and bid defiance to their sister churches under the plea of independence. It is virtually saying, We regard not your approbation; we do not appreciate your fellowship or care for your correspondence. Certainly such is not the way pointed out in the divine rule for keeping “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:20,21) This rule bears the sacred seal of the eternal King, and may be relied on with implicit confidence.

Again, in conclusion, we wish to say that our object in this article is not to disagree with the views of brother Blakeslee, for we as decidedly disapprove of the ungodly course which he condemns as he does, but our design is, while we repudiate and condemn the wrong, to discriminate between the right and the wrong, and we trust that he will understand and appreciate our motive. We cannot resist the conviction, from an experience of fifty-two years, that a general meeting of the Elders, brethren and sisters of churches of the same faith and order once a year, or oftener, if convenient, is both lawful and expedient. The primitive churches and members did meet as frequently as possible for mutual edification, without any restriction on account of distinct organization into separate branches, and every expression of admonition recorded, to our understanding, tended to encourage, if not to absolutely enjoin such gatherings, as both duty and privilege. If churches are to isolate themselves from each other, pay no regard to the order nor seek the general welfare of the whole body, what is to become of that sympathy, concert and identity which is to distinguish all the members of Christ as one body, animated by one life, fed at one table, on the same food, having but one and the same interest, and all bound to the same destiny? Why should a single branch of the church wish to isolate herself from her fellow-branches and eat her morsel alone? The very spirit of vital Christianity calls for association. “Come and hear, all ye that fear God,” whether belonging locally to this or that branch. All who fear the Lord and obey the voice of his servant, are members of one Christ, governed by one Head, constituting but one body, and members one of another in union so close, and sympathy so vital, that if one member suffers all the body feels the pain. We do not argue that for such association any distinct organization or written constitution is indispensable, only so far as may be useful to preserve harmony and good order. The yearly meetings in some sections, and conferences, or corresponding meetings, in other sections of the country, may secure all that is desirable, but those who are partial to the one form should be slow to censure their brethren who see cause to promote the same object substantially in another form, unless such form shall be manifestly subversive of the order of the gospel. Not only the organized associations, but all other forms of meetings are liable to abuses, and it becomes the saints to

watch diligently, and see that all things be done decently and in order. Let us prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 1, 1863.

ROMANS 14:5; GALATIANS 4:10; COLOSSIANS 2:16

Brother Beebe: – If it will not be too much trouble, please give your opinion through the *Signs of the Times* on Romans 14:5, Gal. 4:10, and Col. 2:16. I do not ask your views on each of these verses separately, but as they all seem to embrace the same subject. What I desire to know is, whether Christians are required to observe the Sabbath as now kept by most professors of Christianity? By giving your opinion on this subject you will much oblige your brother in Christ, I am worthy to be so called.

Isaac Tucker.
Rose Boom, N. Y.
September 5, 1863.

Although we have frequently given our views on the subject of the Sabbath, we do not hesitate to say we know of no divine authority requiring Christians to observe a Sabbath in the manner in which the first day of the week is generally kept by most professors of Christianity. So far as our knowledge extends, the great majority of modern Sabbatarians profess to regard the first day of the week as a substitution for the Jewish seventh day Sabbath, which God commanded the carnal Israelites to observe, in common with other Sabbaths, as a sign between himself and that nation throughout their generations. If that law is or ever was binding on the Gentiles, or on Christians, for it does not appear from anything contained either in the law or gospel, in either the Old or New Testament, it would require not the first, but the seventh day to be observed. We have never been able to find in the Bible the slightest intimation of a first day Sabbath, or of any other day of the week, except the seventh day, and that was to be observed by the Israelites exclusively as a sign, type or shadow of good things to come. All signs must necessarily signify something definite and particular. When we see over the merchant's door the sign, "Wholesale and retail," the sign signifies to us that the merchant has commodities to sell in large or small quantities. When God placed the bow in the cloud it was for a sign of his oath and promise that the earth should never again be deluged with water. The sign of circumcision in the flesh was to signify that those on whom it was found were debtors to do the whole law. The Jewish Sabbath being a sign, must also have some definite signification. God has told us plainly, by the mouth of Paul, that it, with other handwriting of ordinances, are a shadow of good things to come, but the body, or thing signified, is Christ, or the gospel. The Sabbatic law required those unto whom it was given to abstain totally from work, and to keep the day as a Sabbath of perfect rest, in which no manner of labor was lawful for the Israelite, his servants, or even his beasts; no preaching, no going to meeting, no Sabbath schools, no ringing of bells, harnessing of horses, no riding in chariots, no cooking of food, no kindling of fires nor gathering of sticks; they were not allowed to go out of their tents to look for manna or for any other purpose. All this does not compare well with the modern style

of professed Sabbatarians; but, when viewed as a sign of gospel rest, which is found alone in Christ, we see harmony between the sign and the rest signified. Salvation is not of works, but exclusively of grace, and none can keep the gospel, or antitypical Sabbath, until he is made to cease from his own works, as God did from his. "For we which have believed, do enter into rest." (Heb. 4:3) The Sabbath of the law was a rest from physical labor, but the antitypical Sabbath is a spiritual rest, which is only found in Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. It is a perfect release from the works of the law as a ground of acceptance with God, and a confident resting on Christ, who is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. None but believers can enter into this gospel rest, nor can even Christians enjoy it only when their faith triumphs over their doubts and unbelief. For Christians to go back to the blotted out handwriting of ordinances of the law to observe days, and months, and times, and years, is to turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto they desire again to be in bondage. (Gal. 4:9,10) As all kind of labor was prohibited to the Israelites on their Sabbath days, or Sabbatic years, so Christians are forbidden to perpetuate the abrogated types and ceremonies of the law of carnal commandments. They find embodied in Jesus all that the types and shadows signified. He is our Sabbath; all fullness is embodied in him; in him the weary and the heavy laden find a perfect Sabbath of rest, for his yoke is easy and his burden is light. If the inspired apostle had understood that the legal Sabbath of the Jews was still binding on the Gentile saints, he could not have treated the subject of a preference for days as a matter of indifference, in which one Christian should not judge another, as in Romans 14:5, for if that law were still binding, he, as a faithful witness, set as he was for the defense of the truth, would have required a strict observance of it. Much less would he have been afraid that he had bestowed labor in vain on the Galatian churches because they, under the pernicious influence of Judaizing teachers, were observing the Sabbath days, Sabbath weeks and Sabbath years which the old covenant had enjoined upon the carnal Israelites. (Gal. 4:10,11) But as a final settlement of this matter he commands the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse to "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Col. 2:16,17)

Before we dismiss this subject it may be useful to remind our brother that the seventh day Sabbath was not instituted as a day for public assemblies, or for public or social devotion. The Jews had no command in their law to assemble at the temple or elsewhere to read the law, or for any other purpose, but they were charged with making void the law of God by their traditions. The Jewish elders had taken the liberty to so modify and change the law of the Sabbath as to allow what they were pleased to call works of necessity and mercy; to perform what they prescribed as a Sabbath day's journey, to travel to their temple or synagogues to read and hear the law, or to rescue an ox or an ass that had fallen into a pit. But all this was forbidden in the law which they professed to venerate and obey. From their perversion of the law, and manner of assembling on their Sabbaths, modern Sabbatarians have inferred that the design of the Sabbath day was for public worship, and as the primitive disciples were in the habit of meeting on the first day of the week for social devotion, that the first day was substituted for the seventh, and to be regarded as a Christian Sabbath. But this is all speculation, and without a particle of divine authority, for as the Sabbath of the Jews was given them by express command of God, in which the seventh day was specially designated, and the command restricted to the Jewish nation, no alteration from the seventh to the first day, or extension from the Jews to the Gentiles, could be made without the same express order from God himself. It is true the primitive Christians did sometimes meet for worship and for breaking of bread on the first day, and it is equally true that they also met for the same purposes on every other day of the week. (See Acts 2:46.) The saints have therefore a

sufficient authority for assembling on the first or on any other day for social worship, and they are admonished to forsake not the assembling of themselves together, but that they are not to attach any more sacredness to one day than to any other day, appears from Gal. 4:10, and Col. 2:16, as well as from many other portions of the Scriptures. The Jewish Sabbath being a type of that rest which the children of God enter when delivered from the toil and labor of the works of the law, and by faith enter into that rest which now remaineth to the people of God, the true antitypical Sabbath of the gospel began when Christ arose from the dead, after having nailed the handwriting of ordinances to his cross; and the Sabbath of every individual saint begins experimentally as soon as they are enabled to believe on Jesus, and enter into rest, and cease from their own works. Their rest is spiritual, not physical, and not limited to one day in seven, but is required at all times alike. Casting all their cares on Christ, who careth for them, the believing Christians enter into Christ as their spiritual Sabbath, and his rest is glorious. Abiding in him, they are relieved from all legal works, for they are no more under that law, but under grace. They are dead to the covenant of works, to which they were once wedded, that being now dead to them in which they were once held, and they are now married to their risen Savior, that they may henceforth bring forth fruits unto God, not in the oldness of the letter (or type), but in the newness of the spirit; not for one seventh part of their time, but in a perpetual and everlasting union, in which the Lord has betrothed them unto him forever in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies, and in faithfulness. (Hosea 2:19,20)

“To all God’s people now remains
A Sabbatism, a rest from pains,
And works of slavish kind;
When tired with toil, and faith through fear,
The child of God can enter here,
And sweet refreshment find.

To this, by faith, he oft retreats,
Bondage and labor quite forgets,
And bids his cares adieu;
Slides softly into promised rest,
Reclines his head on Jesus’ breast,
And proves the Sabbath true.

This, and this only, is the way
To rightly keep the Sabbath day,
Which God has holy made.
All keepers that come short of this,
The substance of the Sabbath miss,
And grasp an empty shade.”

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 1, 1863.

I TIMOTHY 2:3, 4

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men *to be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

REPLY TO BROTHER R. BLEVENS

The things which the apostle assures us are good and acceptable to God are the things named in his exhortation contained in the two preceding verses of this chapter. It is good and acceptable to God and, therefore, the inspired apostle exhorts first of all, as of very great importance, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. By the words, *all men*, we understand every description of men, Jews and Gentiles, rich or poor, noble or mean, friends or foes, bond or free, and especially kings, and all others who are in authority over us. This can not mean that it is pleasing to God that we should pray for the universal and everlasting salvation of all the human family, or for the destruction of any portion of our fellow beings. We can not pray in faith for anything the granting of which would involve the veracity or immutable counsel of Jehovah, and such a prayer, if granted, would involve both. The great end, or object, of the prayers of the saints is clearly stated, that we who are thus exhorted to pray may lead a peaceable and quiet life in honesty and godliness.

The spirit of Christianity is peace, it is the vital element of the heaven-born family of God. Among the works of the flesh are hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, and such like: “Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.” (Gal. 5:19-23) The spirit of the gospel is, “Peace on earth and good will towards men.” Hence the corruptions of the flesh and the works and lusts thereof are to be put off, and the Christian is commanded to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” But the Eternal Judge hath most emphatically commanded his disciples differently: “I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:28,29,43,44) And in the same sermon on the mount he taught his disciples to pray, saying, “And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:12,14,15) “Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” “Recompense to no man evil for evil.” “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:14-21) These are some of the lessons of peace enjoined on all the followers of the Prince of Peace, their strict adherence to which shall characterize them as the children of the living God. No Christian, while under the influence of the spirit of his Lord and Master, will ever be willing to disregard, or disobey, any of these instructions. But that they may live quietly and peaceably, it is desirable that the Lord may so control the elements around them that they may not be tempted beyond what they can bear. The soul of righteous Lot was perplexed and sorely vexed from day to day by his ungodly neighbors, and David prayed earnestly that

he might be delivered from strange children. He said he was for peace, but when he spoke, they were for war. Our neighbors, and even our friends, like those of poor old Job, may be permitted to vex us some times, but God can control them, and give us grace to maintain our integrity.

Our enemies may scoff at us, they may persecute and despitefully use us, they may rob us of our substance, deprive us of our rights, or they may assail our characters, and falsely accuse us, to involve us in difficulties. But we are not to retaliate. They are in God's hand and his sword for our chastisement; and we are commanded to pray even for them, and still treat them kindly, and leave the matter with our Heavenly Father; for he will avenge us in due time.

Perhaps the peace of the saints has been interrupted more by the kings and rulers of the earth than by any other class of men. Hence, we are exhorted in a special manner to pray for them. Our God can turn their hearts as the rivers of water are turned; and, as we are confident that he has this supreme power to control them, we are encouraged to pray for them, that their government may not conflict with our most sacred rights to worship God in spirit and in truth. The three Hebrew children were brought in conflict with their king, and they laid the matter before their God, and relied on his deliverance, which they realized in a most astonishing manner. Daniel also was compelled to disobey the decree of his king, and he prayed to his God and was delivered from the lions' jaws. The wise men of the east, being warned of God, disregarded the commands of Herod. Peter and the other apostles were arraigned before the rulers of the people for disloyalty to their authority, boldly declared, "We ought to obey God rather than men." It is very trying to the peace-loving disciples of the meek and lowly Lamb of God to be compelled to disregard the kings and rulers of the earth, yet they are liable to be so circumstanced that they can not avoid it, without disobedience to God. Yet, as all these circumstances are under the control of God, it becomes the saints to pray for them, that so far as is consistent with the pleasure of God, he may put it in their hearts to rule in the fear of God, and restrain them from despotism and oppression.

Prayers, intercessions and giving thanks are to be made for them. Our prayers should ascend to heaven that God may give us good and righteous kings, or other rulers, and our intercessions that he may preserve such righteous kings and rulers, and give them wisdom, and honesty, and keep them in his fear; so that our religious privileges may be secure to us, and we permitted to live as Christians are, by the laws of Christ, required to live in peace with God, and all mankind. And when God, in his providence, casts our lot under such civil institutions as respect our sacred rights, we are to give thanks to God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

This is what we understand the holy apostle to say is good and acceptable to God our Savior. Christians acknowledge no other Savior but God. They know that they have not, can not, save themselves, and they have no confidence in any other name under heaven given, and with one heart they ascribe their finished salvation to him who has said, "For I am God, and beside me there is no Savior." "For therefore, we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe." (I Tim. 4:10) The common salvation which is extended to all the children of men, providentially, is of God; and his special, gracious, complete and everlasting salvation of those that believe is most unquestionably of the living God. This God and Savior worketh all things after the counsel of his will. And he will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. The apostle confirms the truth of this declaration from the fact that there is but one God, and but one true and living God, who created, upholds, and governs all things. And there is one Mediator between God and men, and but one, consequently he is the Mediator for all his people, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, the subjects of whatever kingdom, or rulers of the whole earth. There being no other God, he is the God of the whole earth, and there being no other Savior, none of any of

the tribes of mankind can be saved only in, through, and by him: He being the only Mediator between God and men, no man can come to the Father but by him. It is his sovereign will that all his people, of whatever land, nation, government, or tribe, shall be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. The salvation of all rests not on the will of man, but upon God's will, and their knowledge of the truth rests on his will. "For he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion, and whom he will he hardeneth." (Romans 9:18)

An angel from heaven has brought down the intelligence from the throne of God that Jesus should save his people from their sins, and a man who came from God, whose name was John, has identified this same Jesus as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, while the Eternal Spirit, through prophets and apostles, declares that he saves them from their sins by bearing their sins in his own body on the tree – that he has put away their sins by the sacrifice of himself. He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. And all the ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with singing and everlasting joy, and all the ransomed family of God shall ultimately swell the notes of the immortal song, which no man could learn, but those who were redeemed from the earth. (Rev. 14:3) The expressive words of that song were recorded in Revelation 5:9, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nations and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth."

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 15, 1863.

VOLUME THIRTY-ONE

Time, with unremitting tread, and onward course, has brought us to the close of another eventful year of our mortal pilgrimage; but who can assure us that yet another year shall pass away ere we shall be numbered with the departed? Truly it is because our God is immutable that Jacob is not consumed. As with their lightning speed our moments pass away, and the close of every year reminds us that the time of our departure is at hand, it becomes us to reflect solemnly and soberly on the destiny to which we are so rapidly advancing. However doubtful to our understanding all else may be, we can not doubt that our mortal bodies shall soon be returned to the dust out of which they were fashioned. The silent grave will soon enclose the earthly house of our tabernacle. Of this it is impossible for us to doubt. But, how oft, alas! do we doubt in regard to the irrevocable destiny which awaits us in the world to come? Can it be that after death all that we are shall slumber in the grave? Can soul and spirit perish forever in the tomb, and we be as unconscious of all things after death as we were before our birth? It can not be. Death can separate the soul and spirit, the life and animation from these bodies, but it can not annihilate! We can not cease to be. The dust shall return to dust, but the soul shall return to God who gave it. It would be as reasonable to believe that we only exist in imagination, that we only are dreaming that we live, and move, and have a being, as to believe that we can cease to exist. For, if we do in reality exist, then it is an unavoidable conclusion, there must be an adequate pre-existing cause for our existence; and that cause must be God. Creatures could not exist if there were no Creator to give them being. And he who is competent to give existence must be self-existent, alone can be independent;

and these perfections can only be found in God. Our own existence, therefore, proves beyond all successful contradiction the being of a God. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. (Rom. 1:20) The providence of God, of which we will not now particularly speak, also testifies of his existence, and supreme power. But on the revelation which he has graciously made, by his Word and Spirit, we depend for a saving knowledge of him. Admitting, then, his being, and that we are his creatures, we substantially acknowledge his right to rule over us, and our obligation to revere and obey him. To deny his existence is Atheism; to admit his existence is an acknowledgment of his right to order our destiny, and to dispose of us according to his sovereign will and pleasure; and, with the four beasts, and the four and twenty elders, it becomes us to fall down before him, and in their language, confess, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created." (Revelation 4:11)

As his creatures we have all sinned. By the offence of one man, sin has entered into the world, and death by sin; and death has passed on all men, because all have sinned. An indisputable demonstration of this is found in the universal mortality of all the posterity of that one man by whom sin has entered. Hence, the living know that they must die. Every year consigns its millions to the grave. The argument is irresistible. The year now closing has been more prodigal of human life than any of its predecessors, at least so far as our knowledge extends. And still the grim messenger, still unsatiated, lingers over our battle fields, our Navy, and our private dwellings. With unabating fury he aims his fatal shaft at the youth, the beauty, and the pride of our land, while all other classes of our fellow mortals are being hurried to their graves.

"Where is the man that draws his breath,
Safe from disease, secure from death?"

How blessed to know, amidst the ravages of death, and under the conviction that we who survive must shortly, in our turn, follow to the house which is appointed for all men, that for us Christ has disarmed death of its sting, and the grave of her victory. That, although in the earthly Adam we all die, in our spiritual Adam we are immortal. He is our Resurrection and our Life. He that believeth on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in him shall never die.

While we have much to lament, and great cause for deep humiliation before God on account of the strife and ill-will which abounds around us, and for God's judgments which are abroad in our land, we who have a good hope, through grace, have abundant cause to bow down in humble acknowledgment of his goodness and distinguishing mercy bestowed on us, and for the hope of immortal glory beyond the grave. Truly, this world is not the Christian's home. They would not live here always. For them to live is Christ, and to die is gain. In the world they shall have tribulation, but out of great tribulation they shall finally come up, with garments made white in the blood of the Lamb.

With the close of this year we close the Thirty-First Volume of the *Signs of the Times*, and the thirty-first year of our editorial labor. The fears of pecuniary embarrassment which were appalling to us at the commencement of the year, have been averted in the good providence of God, through the activity and generosity of our brethren, and friends, who have nobly sustained us, both with their liberal contributions, and their activity in extending our circulation. But for their kindness we think the publication would have involved us beyond what we were able to bear.

We tender our grateful thanks to those who have so cheerfully, generously, and voluntarily come to the rescue; and we assure them all that their donations, and also their successful exertions to procure new

paying subscribers have been gratefully appreciated, and not only saved us from actual loss, but enabled us to reduce the amount of indebtedness under which we were struggling one year ago.

Although the price of printing paper fell to a lower figure during the past year, we are sorry to say it is now very high and still rising. And from the depreciation of our paper currency and other causes, of which our readers are aware, the cost of every kind of stock required for our publication is becoming enormous. But still, we do not propose to alter our subscription terms, lest we should place it beyond the limited ability of the poor to obtain it.

Several hundreds have been supplied during the past year out of the contributions which have been received as gratuitous donations.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 15, 1863.

CLOSE OF THE VOLUME

With this number we close the volume of 1863, and the thirty-first year of our labors in the publication of the *Signs of the Times*. Whether we have justly delineated the *signs of the times* in our record of passing events, and in our labors generally to show the tendency of the religious developments of the thirty years which have just passed, our readers must judge. We have never assumed the infallible inspirations of the holy apostles or prophets, but we have not shunned to declare the counsel of God, so far as we have had light on the subjects which have been discussed through our columns.

When we spread our banner to the breeze there was great commotion in the religious world. The new theories of doctrine and legions of humanly invented religious institutions which were at that time deluging and overwhelming the Baptist denomination had become so oppressive to those who were unwilling to be governed by any other than the laws and institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ, or by any other rule of determining what were the laws and institutions of Christ, than the holy scriptures, they were compelled to withdraw fellowship and companionship from those who were wedded to their own inventions. The great fight of afflictions, persecution, and derision to which we were then subjected is well known to the few who were our contemporaries then, and who now survive. According to common computation, a generation has passed from these mortal shores since then, and of those who were with us then, but very few, comparatively, now remain on the earth. Those who do yet live and those who have access to the early volumes of this paper will bear us witness that we did so interpret what we regarded as the *signs of the times*, as signifying, as we believed, the very things which are at this day so fully and so fearfully realized throughout our country.

That the numerous humanly invented religious institutions, falsely called Benevolent, blending the Church and World in their embrace, partaking of the elements of Christ and State, and claiming a national character, and withal, promising the evangelization of the world, and the speedy advent of their promised Millennium, we interpreted as indications of the ripening abominations of anti-christ, which would, as we understood the predictions of the scriptures, culminate in a millennium of blood. Such signs have been noted, and as the spirit of fanaticism has increased, and as the world has been more and more fascinated with the spreading delusions, our announcement of our convictions have

been attributed to a fault-finding spirit, and a perverse disposition to oppose everything that is good. We do not claim for ourselves, or for our brethren who have written for our columns, any more sagacity, or ability to unveil the dark pages of the future than others possess, but we do claim that we have relied on what God has spoken by the mouth of all his prophets and apostles. And still the dark cloud lowers upon the world, like a gloomy pall, mantling in its deepest shades alike the clergy and the laity of the Man of Sin, the son of perdition, whose coming, as we are informed, is with all signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.

Signs are also given of the oppression, and persecution of the saints of God: Signs of Zion's oppressions, and of her deliverance's: Signs of delusions, of vital piety, and of revivals: Signs of the falling away from the faith and order of the gospel, and of being turned to fables: And finally, there are signs which we are admonished to heed of the final coming of our God and Savior, when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on his enemies, and for the everlasting deliverance of all those who love his appearing.

Brethren, friends, patrons, of the *Signs of the Times*, in view of the present state of the Church of God, in view of the eventful period we are now passing through, in view of the manifest indications of the near approach of the resurrection of the Lord's Two Witnesses, and of the awful judgments, long restrained, but now about to overwhelm the adversaries, can you afford to dispense with the further publication of the *Signs of the Times*? To sustain it will require, as during the past year, your exertion to extend its circulation, and the liberality of those who are able to contribute to its support. Should we increase the rates of subscription, as most of the publications of the day have, we greatly fear that we should thereby place it beyond the ability of very many of the poor who desire to receive it. The liberal support, so seasonably given during the now closing year, assures us that we shall be sustained, and if the Lord will, we shall issue the first number of our next volume on or about the first of January, 1864, and continue its publication through the year.

Middletown, N. Y.,
December 15, 1863.

INTRODUCTORY SALUTATION

With thanksgiving to the bountiful giver of every good and perfect gift, we greet the advent of another New Year, and pray that it may be attended with greater happiness to our readers than the last two of its predecessors have been. Our devout gratitude is due to our gracious and long-suffering God, that amid all the calamities, strife, conflicts and carnage of the last year, our lives have been preserved, and we have been favored so far beyond many of our fellows. But as our days are flying faster than the weaver's shuttle, hurrying us on to that destiny which lies before us, it is meet that we should enter upon the developments of the new year with ardent prayer that God may guide, direct, support and protect us in and throughout all our subsequent pilgrimage. May the God of all grace so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. And if we be risen with Christ, may we seek those things that are above, and may we set our affection on things above, and not on things on the

earth. Here on earth we have no continuing city; we are but wayfaring and transient passengers, rapidly filling up the measure of our days, and hastening to the house appointed for all the living.

Who of us, in a retrospection of the past year, can feel satisfied that we have passed the time of our sojourning with that singleness of heart that becomes us, as the professed flowers of the meek and lowly Lamb of God? That we have used our example and influence in striving to allay the spirit of strife and discord with which all the elements around us are so fearfully surcharged? Who of us can feel assurance that the blessing of the peace-maker belongs to us? We may not have designedly fanned the flame of discord, or urged our fellow men to deeds of blood guiltiness, but have we exemplified in our own lives and deportment the spirit which breaths "Peace on earth and good will to men?" A most solemn obligation rests on us who profess the religion of him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, lest we belie our holy profession, deny our Lord and Master, and earn for ourselves a classification with those who have gone in the way of Cain.

But whatever may have been our waywardness, our wanderings, God has graciously spared our unprofitable lives, and here we are now entering upon the incoming year as monuments of the forbearance and long suffering of our merciful God. May the sincere aspirations of our hearts arise in thankful strains of praise to God, and in supplication that he may grant us grace to keep us from evil, and that his Holy Spirit may guide us in the way of holiness, for his name's sake.

In entering upon the labors of the new year, our patrons will naturally expect an expression from us in regard to our designs and our prospects. It is true paper and all other materials for printing are very high, and the general rise in the price of provisions, fuel, rents, clothing, and all the necessaries of life, will increase the expense of labor, so that the actual cost of publishing will be increased about fifty per cent above the average cost for the first twenty-nine years of our labor, and the depreciation of our paper currency below the standard value of gold, would justify a proportionate increase in our terms; but still, as we greatly desire to keep our terms of subscription within the limited means of the poor, we have undertaken to adhere to our old terms. Yet in doing so, we have presumed on the noble generosity of our more affluent brethren and friends, whose seasonable aid during the last year, saved us from loss, and enabled us to supply the paper to several hundred non-paying subscribers. There are scattered through the country, as our brethren are well aware, very many aged, infirmed, and poor, who take great delight in reading the "Signs of the Times", but are really too poor to pay even One Dollar a year for the privilege: these, to the extent of our ability, we have always endeavored to supply gratuitously, but many of them during the last year have been supplied by the liberality of kind-hearted friends.

We were also substantially aided by the vigilance of our friends in procuring for us new paying subscribers. Our list during the past year was increased nearly one thousand. With an enlarged circulation the "Signs of the Times" would be remunerative at one dollar a year paid in advance, provided all were able and prompt to pay that amount, but to enable us to supply the needy we require not only an increase of paying patronage, but the generous contributions of those who are able and willing to assist.

We do not deem it expedient to offer any pledges to our subscribers in regard to the manner in which we intend, if spared, to conduct the publication, more than to say, the best and utmost of our ability shall be employed to make the "Signs of the Times" an interesting and edifying visitant; as the thirty-one years of constant devotion to the work will afford more reliable indemnity than any amount of verbal pledges we could make. For nearly one third of a century our subscribers have born with our infirmities, and kindly overlooked our failures and our imperfections. They have always stood by us, through evil and good report, and when we have been wantonly assailed by persecution, and the

envenomed tongue of slander has been employed against us, they have never yet failed to come to our rescue. We are not aware of any essential change in our sentiments in regard to the doctrine, order or ordinances of the gospel since we first commenced our labors, thirty-one years ago. We do flatter ourself that so long a correspondence with very many thousands of our brethren in all parts of the country, embracing those of all ages, gifts and peculiarities has served to strengthen our faith, enlarge our understanding, and to greatly confirm us in the doctrine and practice by which the Old School Baptists are distinguished from every other religious profession on earth.

If our brethren and friends are looking for anything more or better in the forthcoming volume than they have had in the former volumes, we fear they will be disappointed, although there is abundant room for improvement, and so far as God shall give ability, our constant aim shall be, as it has hitherto been, to do the best we can.

Sensible as we are of short-coming on our part, we feel a pleasing consciousness that we have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God (so far as we were able) from any fear of consequences. We are certain that God himself will sustain his own eternal truth, and maintain his own most precious cause, against any and all opposition, and if we have been or shall be permitted to publish anything incompatible with God's cause and his truth, the sooner it shall be exposed the better.

As we begin the new Volume we enter the sixty-fourth year of our natural life in the flesh: one-half of that time has been devoted to the publication of this paper. The allotted years of man are now drawing rapidly to their close. But a very few more years can be reasonably anticipated at the very most, and as we descend the steep declivity of mortal life, should we still be spared, our mental as well as physical powers must fail. Our readers will doubtless discover that the meridian with us has long been passed, and the declining of our sun, so far as our days on earth are concerned, indicates that it soon will set. But the Sun of Righteousness, with healing wings bears upward the hope of immortality, so that, although the outward man decays, the inward man is renewed day by day.

Middletown, N. Y.,
January 1, 1864.

JUDGES 5:23

In our last number, our brother and sister, William and Mary White, present their request for our views on Judges 5:23.

“Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

These words occur in the song of Deborah and Barak, in which they praise God for the glorious victories which he had given them over Sisera the commander of the army of Jabin, King of Canaan. The circumstances of the case are thus stated; The children of Israel had sinned, and done evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, for a chastisement for their transgressions. Being unable to withstand the superior forces of Jabin, and his mighty army, his skillful General and his nine hundred chariots of iron, they after twenty years of severe suffering cried unto the

Lord for help, and the Lord directed Deborah, who at that time judged Israel, and was also a prophetess, to call Barak, and with him ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulon, and with this comparatively small force to “go and draw toward Mount Tabor.” And the Lord promised that he would draw unto her, Sisera, the captain of Jabin’s army, to the river Kishon, with his chariots and his multitudes, and deliver them into her hand.

Of Meroz, which seems to have been a village near the brook Kishon, we have but very little account, but from the anathema pronounced in the text, it appears that the inhabitants of that place did not listen to the word of the Lord, as spoken by Deborah, and came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The arminians have frequently referred to this passage with an air of exultation to prove that the Lord God of Israel is sometimes in want of help, – that his purposes require for their execution the use of means, the help of man, and that when men fail to lend an helping hand to the Lord they deserve the bitter curses which are in this case denounced against Meroz and its inhabitants. This text has been relied on by the advocates of all the modern religious institutions for evangelizing the world. They would have us believe the Lord is endeavoring to convert the heathen and bring on the millennium; that he is wooing and beseeching sinners to consent to be saved on certain terms and conditions, and that the success of his gracious designs depends very much on the amount of aid afforded him by the sons of men. That those generous souls, who put forth their hands to help him secure the ark, will not be subject to the curse of Meroz. Help is, in their estimation, needed in the formation of benevolent societies such as Mission, Tract, Sabbath School, Temperance, Abolition, Penny and Mite Societies, – That with sufficient help of this kind the heathen may be converted to God, and the world speedily evangelized. That those who are engaged in these are really coming to the help of the Lord, and will be blessed for their seasonable help, and generous contributions, but those who stand aloof from them will share the anathema of Meroz and the inhabitants thereof. But does this text favor that idea? Let us carefully examine. In the case of Meroz, who was to be helped, God or Meroz? Were the inhabitants to be cursed for failing to help the Lord? Was the Lord, or Israel, in trouble requiring help? Did the Lord call on Israel to help him subdue the army of Jabin, or was it not the children of Israel who were oppressed by Jabin, and being unable to deliver themselves, after being sorely oppressed twenty years, called on the Lord to help them? Did the Lord come down from heaven to receive help from Deborah, Barak, or their ten thousand men? How absurd, not to say blasphemous, to talk of helping the Omnipotent God, who weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance who taketh up the islands as a very little thing. If it were possible for him to need any help, what could puny mortals do to assist him? Behold he sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in, that bringeth the princes to nothing and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. How much can these wonderful grasshoppers do to assist the Almighty God? What aid could these minute particles of less than nothing and vanity render to him who inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy? How very natural it is for poor vain man to forget that he is but dust and ashes and fancy that he can do exploits.

The subject before us must be plain to the candid reader. It was the children of Israel who needed help, and cried to the Lord for help; and the Lord signified to Deborah that he would render them the help they desired, at a special time and place; and commanded Deborah to come with Barak and ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulon and receive the help of the Lord at or near Mount Tabor. They went to the place as the Lord commanded, and found The Help of

Israel and the Savior thereof in the time of trouble was there, they received the help of the Lord, and were delivered from their enemies, and their oppressors were slain.

But Meroz, we suppose like our modern arminians, despised the help of the Lord, and still had confidence in their own ability to take care of themselves. At all events they came not to the help of the Lord. Why they came not, we are not informed; but it is natural to suppose they were all arminians, and could easier entertain the idea of helping the Lord than of being helped and saved by him.

As the inhabitants of Meroz despised the help of the Lord in the days of Deborah the prophetess, so the will worshipers of our day and all the workmongrel tribes of the earth in all ages, have vainly imagined themselves able to help themselves, and it is very apparent from their activity and zeal in multiplying what they call Benevolent Institutions for saving the heathen and converting the world, that they believe the Lord needs their help to sustain his cause and execute his work, much more than they feel themselves in want of help from him.

Indeed we have never known them to apply this text in any other way than to represent the Lord as suffering for the want of help, and bitterly cursing those who come not up to help him. We pity those deluded souls who are so infatuated as to imagine that the adorable God who sustains the Universe, who does his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth can need to be himself sustained by any of the creatures that he has made.

Middletown, N. Y.,
January 15, 1864.

ISAIAH 45:23

Brother Beebe: – I have been a subscriber for your paper four years, and I how feel unwilling to deny myself the luxury it affords, especially in these trying times, for it contains all the preaching I have, except that which is devoted to the do and live system. May you be continued long to publish the “Signs of the Times”, and fear not to declare the whole counsel of God.

Please give your views on Isaiah 45:23, and oblige,

Yours, etc.

Benjamin Luellen.

Howard Co., Ia., Jan. 25, 1864.

REPLY: – The text proposed for consideration and comment reads thus: “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”

How amazing the thought that the great and terrible God, who created all beings and all worlds, and who holds the destiny of all things in his sovereign hand, whose every word demands our most profound attention and implicit belief should condescend to confirm any of his declarations by a solemn oath. To even doubt his veracity in anything he has ever said involves the sin of blasphemy. He commands and it stands fast: He speaks and it is done. He is the God who cannot lie, for it is incompatible with his very nature. He is the God of truth. “Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd

of the earth;” but “Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker.” If to discredit what God has spoken be a crime of such fearful magnitude, how terrible must be the doom of those who will virtually charge him with perjury, by contradicting what he has confirmed by his oath. Men verily swear by the greater, and to them an oath for confirmation is an end of all strife. But our God, because he could swear by no greater has sworn by himself. There cannot possibly be anything so high, so sacred, or so holy as himself, and his holiness is pledged by his oath.

“The words his sacred lips declare,
Of his own mind the image bear;
What should him tempt, from frailty free,
Blest in his self sufficiency?

He will not his great self deny,
A God all truth can never lie:
As well might he his being quit
As break his oath, or word forget.

Let frightened rivers change their course,
Or backward hasten to their source;
Swift through the air let rocks be hurled,
And mountains like the chaff be whirled.

Let suns and stars forget to rise,
Or quit their stations in the skies;
Let heaven and earth both pass away,
Eternal Truth shall ne’er decay.”

“The word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return.” What the immutable God has said cannot be recalled, unsaid or countermanded; nor is there any need to recall what he has said, for it has gone forth from his mouth in righteousness. If right that it should be spoken, it would be wrong to recall it. Princes and potentates of the earth may send forth decrees which they would gladly recall, as when Darius made a decree that any man that should for thirty days ask a petition of any God, or man, save of him, he should be cast into the den of lions, when he saw that his decree had not gone forth in righteousness – that he had been imposed upon by his nobility – how gladly would he have recalled the decree, if he had possessed power to cause it to return, come back, or be unmade. What has gone forth from the mouth of God can be liable to no unforeseen consequences – it must prosper in the thing whereunto He has sent it; therefore there can be no necessity for revoking, calling back, or causing His word to return to Him. “For 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 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 sent it.” (Isa. 55:11,12) Was ever a shower of rain intercepted in its course, when descending from the heavens, and sent back by any human, or creature, agency? When God unstops the bottles of heaven, can earth forbid, or prevent, the rain, or snow, from falling to the earth? Who, then, can resist the execution of the strong decrees of the Almighty God. The power, the omnipotence, of his word has been tested. His word went forth in the creation of the universe.

“He call’d the world from emptiness;
The world obeyed, and came.”

God said “Let there be light, and there was light.” He said, “Let us make man,” and man was made. “For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” (II Peter 3:5-7)

Having briefly considered the awful and sacred import of the oath of the immutable God, and the omnipotence of his word, as securing beyond the possibility of any failure, the accomplishment of its mission, we will now call the attention of the readers to the declaration of God thus solemnly attested in our text:—“That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.” The irrevocable word and oath of God has gone forth from his mouth in righteousness, pledging the truth and holiness of Jehovah in solemn confirmation of the declarations immediately connected with and embraced in the text.

1. That none but God can save a sinner: that he is God, and beside him there is no Savior. That he, the Lord, is God, and there is none else; a just God and a Savior, there is none beside him. All other beings, works or things relied on for salvation are idols; and all who depend on anything but God alone for justification and salvation are makers of idols, and, as God is true, they shall all go to confusion together.

2. This only true, almighty and unchangeable God who is the just God and Savior, and there is none else, has called all the seed of Jacob to seek his face: saying to that seed, in all the omnipotence of his word which created the world and sustains all things, “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.” And this order from his eternal throne has not been given in vain. His word has gone out of his mouth in righteousness and shall not be recalled or suffered to return void of the work whereunto he has sent it. He said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain. Though his omniscient eye could see that seed intermingled with all the tribes of mankind like sheep going astray, and wandering to the utmost extremities of the earth, yet – Isaiah 52:10 – “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” The words, “All ye ends of the earth,” and “All the ends of the earth,” are applied to the scattered sheep of Israel whom our Lord has redeemed out of every kindred, language and tribe under heaven, and to none else, for if those declarations embraced all the inhabitants of the world, they would secure the salvation of all the human family, whereas God has sworn that some of them shall go to confusion together; “but Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.” See verses 16 and 17 of this same chapter. The words *all ye ends of the earth*, no more necessarily include others of the human family beside the Israel saved in the Lord, than they do all the beasts, fowls and fishes contained in the world. The whole provision of mercy and salvation proclaimed in this chapter is clearly applied exclusively to the seed of Jacob, for God has said, “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.” Israel shall be saved in the Lord: but they shall all be confounded and all go to confusion together who depend for salvation on anything short of God himself; whether it be on their own works, or the works of others, for it is the essence of idolatry to depend for salvation on anything but on God alone, or to attribute to any other being or thing that which belongs alone to God; for he will not give his glory to another, nor his praise unto graven images.

3. The irresistible power of that word which has gone forth in righteousness from the mouth of God commanding efficaciously all the seed of Jacob to seek his face for salvation, and to look to him as the only just God and Savior, shall, according to the oath of God, secure the submission and allegiance of

every one of them. Every knee shall bow in humble submission to God, their Savior. God will himself secure this: for he will make his people willing in the day of his power, and they shall come who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in his holy mount at Jerusalem. Unto him then according to the word of his oath shall every knee, of all the seed of Jacob, bow; for he will say 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; even every one that is called by my name – for I have created him for my glory: I have formed him, yea I have made him. The arrows of the Lord are sharp in the hearts of the king’s enemies, whereby the people fall under him. However distant, they shall be brought nigh; however stubborn, they shall be humbled; however rebellious they shall bow the knee to him, when he shall call them by his grace, every one that is called by his name, shall hear his voice, and they that hear shall live. He will take away their stony heart and give them a heart of flesh. He will fill them with contrition, and give them that repentance which is unto life, which needeth not to be repented of. The failure of one single knee of all who are now embraced in the word of his oath, would involve his truth. But why should we argue this point: has not the mouth of God spoken it? Has not the sacred oath of the immutable Jehovah confirmed the irrevocable decree? What then if infidels dispute, they cannot change the thing that has gone out of his mouth in righteousness.

While every bending knee of all the seed of God’s spiritual or anti-typical Israel shall signify their hearts subdued by sovereign grace and their unreserved submission to God as the only Savior, their oath shall signify their full allegiance to him as their rightful sovereign.

This perfect subjugation of all the redeemed family to their God and Savior is referred to by Paul, Rom. 14:11, and Phil. 2:10,11. In both of which the inspired apostle establishes the final, perfect and everlasting subjugation and submission of all the seed of Jacob, and the fulfillment of the word of the oath and promise of that that, All Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation, that he shall not be ashamed nor confounded in a world without end, while all who are the makers of idols shall with equal certainty go to confusion together. “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.” Thus abundantly demonstrating that in the holy calling of his chosen people, he said not to the seed of Jacob, “Seek ye my face, in vain.” It cannot be that Jehovah shall speak in vain. The word of his power shakes the heavens and the earth, and makes the mountains leap from their beds of ages, and skip like rams, and the hills like lambs.

“He said, Let the wide heavens be spread,
And heaven was stretched abroad:
Abraham, I’ll be thy God, he said,
And he was Abraham’s God.”

Instead of sinners bringing God to their terms, in the matter of salvation according to the delusions of the arminians, God’s word shall prevail, its power and glory shall be felt, known and confessed by all who are the called according to his purpose and grace, and on his own head shall the crown of Immanuel flourish.

With what supreme delight may all the humbled saints contemplate the awful power and majesty of the word of God. We felt its omnipotence when we were by it called to repentance, when we were by it called to stand in judgment at his august bar! When clouds and darkness were round about him, and he kept back the face of his throne! And when sinking down to the deeps below under the sense of our guilt, we witnessed the omnipotence of the word which from his sacred lips said unto us “Live.” So shall the power of his word be witnessed when he shall bid the nations of the dead arise, and meet the

destiny already spoken by his mouth and made unavoidable by the power and immutability of his irrevocable word.

But now, how stands the case with us? Are we setting to our seal that God is true in all these declarations? Have our stiff knees been made to bend in reverential submission to our God? Have we sworn allegiance to the King of Saints? Or are we disputing and still blaspheming? Awful thought! are we trying to make God a liar, or charging him with perjury. We either believe what God has said and sworn, or we are infidels.

Middletown, N. Y.,
January 15, 1864.

GENESIS 3:15

Brother Beebe: – Please give your views on Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Pleasant Cox
Hancock County, Illinois
January 29, 1864

Freely confessing our utter inability to comprehend, much less to elucidate the subject proposed, in all its ramifications, we will only attempt to give such views as we have, and in as intelligible a manner as we may be enabled to do, and leave brother Cox, and all others who may feel interested, to examine and compare our views with the Scriptures, which we regard as our only safe and infallible directory and guide, and we feel most sensibly that even the Scriptures can afford no clear light to our dark understanding any farther than it shall please God to open them to us by his Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures present two grand, sublime and, to finite minds, incomprehensible mysteries. The one is called “the mystery of godliness,” and, without controversy, it is very great. The other is of an opposite character, and is called “the mystery of iniquity,” which now worketh, long has worked, and shall continue to work, until the mystery of God shall be finished, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, as God hath declared to his servants, the prophets. (Rev. 10:7) These are both called mysteries, because they are too profound for the limited understanding of the sons of men; they baffle the wisdom of the wise and confound the understanding of the great, the learned and the prudent. These two mysteries were launched upon the world in the beginning, in the morning of the creation, and destined to run their parallel, yet opposite courses, both under the direct supreme power and government of him who reigns God over all, and blessed forevermore. To ask of us to solve these mysteries, to lift the impenetrable veil which God has thrown over them, and so simplify and explain them as to make them clear and plain to the understanding of men, would be to ask of a finite being that which none but God himself has power to do; but this our brother has not asked, he calls only for our views, and, feeble though they are, we attempt to give them.

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman.” These words are preceded by a dreadful and irrevocable curse, pronounced upon the serpent, and may be regarded, so far as the serpent is involved, as a part of the curse: “Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman,” etc. The two characters named (the serpent and the woman) were, literally, present before the Lord, to hear from his mouth their respective judgments. Whatever may be said of the serpent, as a beast of the field, and included among the cattle which God had made, or whatever questions may arise as to his form, motive, power, food, etc., we must leave to the speculative mind of the curious, as we have no opinion to offer beyond what is written. It is, however, plainly stated that he was a serpent, having among the creatures of God, a corporeal body, of material substance, which, being made of the dust of the ground, could be sustained and fed upon the same, even of the dust in its crude or unvegetated state. The sustenance of all earthly creatures is by vegetation, and animal life from the dust, every green herb and every tree yielding fruit to be his meat or food, but the serpent is doomed to eat dust itself, all of which, to our mind, has an important significance of which we may speak hereafter. The serpent is repeatedly mentioned in the Scriptures, and among the creatures of God, and from this serpent in the garden, we presume, all that species of reptiles which still infest the earth have emanated. But it is not, in our understanding of the subject, as a mere animal that the serpent is here presented, but as possessing more subtlety than any of the beasts of the field which the Lord God had made; that subtle, unholy, delusive and beguiling spirit which the serpent possessed to a greater extent than any other of the beasts of the field, is what characterizes him as the father of lies and king over all the children of pride. In his mystical character and career, then, we may consider him as the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, as beguiling unstable souls, as going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. In this character he is called the devil, and Satan that deceiveth. (Rev. 12:9) This certainly is the serpent which deceived Eve, and, through her, the whole world of mankind. And again, he is still more fully identified as “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan.” (Rev. 20:2) We have no account of any older serpent than that serpent which deceived Eve, and, through her, the whole world, and who still is deceiving the whole world. Many names are applied to him in the Scriptures, as the dragon, leviathan, Apollyon, murderer, father of lies, adversary, etc.

Having thus far identified the serpent on whom the curse was pronounced, we will offer a few thoughts in regard to the woman with whom he is brought into collision by the curse and her seed. The woman is easily identified as the only woman then brought into existence or manifestation, the wife of Adam, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and called woman because she was taken out of man. And Adam called her name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. The apostle Paul informs us that the man was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression, and in Eph. 5:22-33, he transfers the figure to Christ and the church. “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” The woman literally considered, is a part of Adam, and the mother of all his posterity. Beguiled by the serpent, she is in the transgression, betrayed, ensnared, guilty of disobedience to God, naked, ruined and condemned to die, without the least particle of power or ability to avert the ruin in which she was involved' and all her posterity included in her guilt shame. But as the emblematic bride of the Lamb of God we find in her person, her names, her circumstances and in all particulars a typical personification of the bride and wife of the second Adam, which is the Lord from heaven. We are expressly told (Romans 5:14) that Adam is the figure of him that was to come. A figure is a type, an emblem, an image, a representation. We are not told that Adam was the figure, but he is, still continues to be, the image of him that was (not is) to come. In I Cor. 15:45-49, the same apostle

says, “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward 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. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

It is interesting and comforting, as well as instructive to the children of God, to trace the numerous points of analogy between the woman as the type, or figure, and the church of God, to whom those resemblances point, but in this article we must restrict our remarks to only a few of them. The woman was created in the earthy Adam; the church of God is created in the second, or antitypical Adam. The woman was preserved in Adam, and so the election of grace is sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus and called. Adam said of his wife, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” Christ, by the mouth and pen of his inspired apostle, said to the church, “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” (Eph. 5:30) The life of Adam was the life of Eve, before as well as after she was formed and brought into manifestation, and she never had any vitality independent of him. Even so the church of God existed in Christ, a participant of his immortality, before the world began. Her life was with the Father, and was given to her in the Son, and is hid with Christ in God, and she has not one particle or pulsation of spiritual, immortal and eternal life independent of him. One striking point of analogy appears in the response of Adam to the summons of his creator, which, to our mind, is full of thrilling interest: “The woman whom thou gayest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” (Gen. 3:12) This was not, as we conceive, to throw the blame on the woman, nor on God, nor to exculpate himself, but the words were inspired and prophetic; she was identified with him. If God had not given her to him he had no power to possess her, and if she had not been given to be with him the world could not have been peopled, nor could the designs of God to develop his purpose and grace in the salvation of millions of mankind been accomplished. But mark the figurative import of his words, as coming from the lips of Christ: “Thine they were, and thou gayest them me.” “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.” “She gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” “Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression.” How stood the case? The woman was in the transgression, and must surely die; she could not come back to Adam. Was it the design that they should be forever separated, that Eve should die and Adam live? How could that be when their life was identical? What then was the alternative? Ah, there was a purpose of God involved that could not be thwarted. She was given to be with him, and although she had no power to return to him, he had power and love and inclination to go to her, to follow her into the transgression, and so she gave to him of the tree, and he did eat. So the church, given to Christ in irrevocable covenant, was designed to be with him, and she shall ultimately reign with him in unfading glory and immortality. But in order to secure this glorious ultimatum, when she, beguiled, betrayed and ensnared by the subtlety of the devil, was in the transgression, condemned by the holy law of God, condemned and under wrath, without the power to return, ultimately without strength even then, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, did not forget the object and immutable purpose of the gift, and although he was not, could not be deceived, he received from her of the tree (which was a figure of the law), and he did eat. For in being made of a woman, he was made under the law, and subject to its demands. Thus at her hand he received of the tree and did eat. He was legally numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sins of many. Though he knew no sin, yet he was made sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. The earthy Adam had no power to take his life again, for, lest he should put forth his hand and eat and live forever, he was sent forth, driven out, and cherubims and this flaming sword Jesus, our second

Adam, encountered, and received the dreadful stroke. It smote the Man that was God's fellow, and was bathed in his atoning blood. But having laid down his life he was able to take it again, and, diffusing that resurrection life through all the members of his body, his bride, he bore her with him to the heavenly places, to live and reign with him in immortal glory.

Having devoted as much space as we can afford to the consideration of the serpent, we will offer a few remarks on their respective seed, and first, the seed of the serpent. The serpent, as a mere animal of corporeal form and animal life, is the progenitor of all the reptiles on the earth or in the sea known as serpents, vipers, dragons, leviathans, etc., and in this sense the serpent's seed is as distinct from the human family as any other classification of the beasts of the field, fowls of the air or monsters of the deep waters. When men are spoken of as serpents, vipers and children of their father the devil, it is not that they are so by natural generation, or corporeal substance, but in their being in possession of the spirit, subtlety, guile and wickedness of Satan. For example, we are told of Cain that he was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. (I John 3:12) There is a sense in which Cain, and many others of the human family, are of that wicked one, but it is not as creatures, for the devil has no creative power, and we have already proved that God is the sole Creator of all mankind; neither is it by natural generation, for God has made all men of one blood. Now Cain, although he was of that wicked one, yet he was begotten of the same father, and conceived and born of the same mother that Abel and Seth were. We are expressly told that Cain was begotten by Adam and born of Eve, and hence was a brother of Abel, whom he slew, but religiously Cain was of that wicked one, and had no affinity or fellowship with the spirit and faith of Abel. As a religionist Cain was a type of all false and ungodly religionists, of whom an inspired apostle says, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Core." (Jude 11) Those scribes and Pharisees whom John refused to baptize were called a generation of vipers, although they had Abraham to their father, according to the flesh. Others were denounced by our Savior as serpents, vipers, and even children of the devil. "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man," etc. Jesus said to them, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed: but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye can not hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:33-a) Here we have what we regard as a clear illustration of what is meant by their being children of the devil; not in their human organization, or natural generation, but the spirit which was in them was of the devil. As men he knew they were the seed of Abraham, but in their spirit, or religion, they were not Abraham's children, they had not the faith of Abraham, and were not born of the Spirit which distinguished Abraham, or they would do the works of Abraham. The truth is, the children of the devil are those who have and are governed by the spirit of the devil. The devil himself is a wicked spirit, and cannot beget matter or material substance, nor can that spirit beget any quality that it does not itself possess. Such are the laws of generation. Adam begat a son in his own likeness. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh [it is not spirit] and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit [it is not flesh]." As Satan is a wicked spirit, so he is

the father of all wicked spirits. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” and as many as are led by the spirit of the devil, are children of the devil. Neither their being born of God, nor of Satan, changes their relation to the earthy Adam, for all are alike in that relation. The evidence of sonship, on the one hand, is, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;” that Spirit of which they are born again bears witness with their spirit that they are the sons, or children, of God; they bear his image, not in the flesh, but in the spirit of their mind, wherewith they serve the law of God. While, on the other hand, the evidence of being children of the devil is, that his children have his spirit. He was a murderer from the beginning, and their feet are swift to shed blood. Misery and destruction are in all their ways, and there is no fear of God before their eyes, and their murderous, destructive, heaven-daring, God-defying, truth-hating and grace-despising propensities clearly show who is the father of the spirit and religion they possess. “I know,” said Jesus, “that ye are Abraham’s seed: but ye seek to kill me.” Enemies of Jesus, enemies of his cause, of his truth, of his word, of his people, yea, enemies of God by wicked works. That Satan does beget his spirit in his children, and that his spirit conforms them to his image and makes them like him, and subjects them to his final and everlasting doom, we think will not be disputed by any who are governed by the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. All the righteous blood of the prophets and saints shall be required of that generation of vipers, who are of their father, the devil, and who do the works of their father. It was this spirit in Cain which moved him to kill Abel, and this same spirit, in the same family, is at this day drenching the earth in human gore and filling our land with widows and orphans, with lamentation, mourning and woe. It is this spirit of devils through which the smoke and venom of hell is belched forth like the flaming vomitings of Vesuvius, in opposing the people of God and the principles of holiness, which devils hate and in which saints delight. O may we try the spirits, whether they be of God, and beware what manner of spirit we are of.

But we pass to consider the seed of the woman, Here seems to be a mystery involved, If the words had been the offspring, or children of the woman, there would be no difficulty in showing that Jerusalem, which is above and free, is the mother of all new testament saints, and if we say that Christ is himself the seed of the woman, how shall we account for the many declarations which testify that the church is his seed? We are certain that the Scriptures are in harmony with themselves; there can be no discord or contradiction in what they assert on this or any other subject; but we may fail to understand, and therefore fail to see their harmony. Beyond all controversy, Christ is the seminal Head and everlasting Father of his people, his church; as it is written, “A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.” (Psalms 22:30) And Peter asserts that the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” etc., “are a chosen generation,” “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” Nevertheless, while it is so clearly established that Christ is the second Adam, the spiritual progenitor of his people, and all that is spiritual, holy and immortal in them is born of God, having been given to the saints in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, still he is the offspring, as well as the root of David, and the bright and morning star. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6) According to this testimony he is the child born and son given, and, at the same time, the everlasting Father to his church. While, on the one hand, we are made partakers of the divine nature by virtue of vital union with him, he, on the other hand, is by his incarnation made partaker of our flesh and blood, according to Hebrews 2:14. As our spiritual and eternal life was hidden with him in God from the ancients of eternity, so his human nature (if so we may call it) was hidden in the people of his election from the creation of the world, and from the earthy Adam, traced through the loins of Abraham, David

and others, until his advent, so that the desire of the Old Testament saints was that the Deliverer should come out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, Setting forth this relationship, it was predicted that a virgin should conceive and bring forth a son, and his name should be called Immanuel, or, God with us. The Word was made flesh and dwelt, among us. God was manifested in the flesh, was made of a woman, and so made under the law that he might redeem them that were under the law. The carnal Jews were ignorant of the mystery, they knew not how, he being David's son, David could by the spirit, "call him Lord, saying; The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool." But it is sufficient to know that he is recognized in the Scriptures both as the root and offspring, the everlasting Father and the child born unto his church. Admitting, then, that he is the seed of the woman, spoken of in our text, we should bear in mind that all his people are embraced in him as that seed, to be developed in the fullness of time.

Having dwelt perhaps too lengthily on the parties concerned in the curse pronounced upon the serpent and his seed, the nature of the curse itself, and its effects, remain to be considered: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The justice of God as a sin-avenger appears in the reason assigned: "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed," etc. The execution of the sentence is not committed to another, for "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman." Enmity, malice and hatred are opposite to the attributes and perfections of God, yet they are all under his control. Even the venom of serpents, the malice and rage of devils, as well as the wickedness of men, are restricted, or allowed to take their course, as God, in the infinity of his wisdom, permits or restrains. The terms of intimacy which has thus far been permitted between the serpent and the woman had produced pernicious results; the woman was beguiled, and by the lying tempter induced to transgress the command of God, and thus brought sin, with all its consequences, into the human family. We do not believe that this result was unforeseen or unprovided for on the part of God, for long ere this a Savior had been provided to redeem, wash, cleanse, purify and make holy and spiritual a people chosen in him before the foundation of the world. We do believe that God always has a purpose worthy of himself in all he does, but his ways are too deep to fathom with human lines, and past finding out by finite minds. Friendly relations, social, amicable associations were, by the righteous curse of God, abolished. Henceforth they should meet only as implacable enemies.

"Let everlasting hatred be
Betwixt the woman's seed and thee."

As it is said, What God hath joined let none put asunder, so we may rest assured that what God has sundered no man can put together. As we see settled, irreconcilable enmity between the human race and the sly, venomous reptiles of the earth, so those who are born and taught of God do see a settled and implacable enmity between the church of God and Satan, and between the children of the devil (those who have the spirit and do the works of their father, the devil, as Cain, and those Jews whom our Lord said were of their father, the devil), and the seed of the woman, and in the conflict the seed of the woman (Christ) shall bruise the serpent's head, and the serpent shall bruise his heel. The heel is not the seat of vitality; it may be bruised and crushed without fatal effects, but the bruising or crushing of the serpent's head implies destruction; so we are told that Christ was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and not only his works, but he shall destroy death and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and the apostle assures the woman, the church of God, that Christ, who is "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16:20) Christ has already triumphed

gloriously over the devil. He has in the conflict, in bearing the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, in his own sacred person, as the seed of the woman, felt the rankling venom of the monster at his heel, and even now, in his members, suffers the bruising of his heel. But as the conflict, when grappling with the powers of darkness personally, was short, and the victory certain, so the consummation of the victory is equally certain to all his members. The conflict of the saints will soon be ended, and they shall be more than conquerors through him that has loved them. While we continue in the flesh we must expect to encounter the wiles of the devil, and we are not now ignorant of his devices. We find him busy in our own flesh, in our earthy nature tempting us in every possible way, and he laughs at our vain attempts to draw him out with a hook, or his tongue with a cord, which we let down. We cannot put a hook into his nose nor bore his jaw through with a thorn. "He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrows cannot make him flee: sling stones are turned with him into stubble." (See Job 41) But impotent as are all the saints to encounter him by their own strength, they know that the God of peace shall shortly bruise him under their feet. Until then let us have on the whole armor of God, that we may withstand his wiles, fight the good fight, finish our course and keep the faith. Lengthy as we have made this article, we have omitted much that has been suggested in the bearings of the subject, and what we have written we submit to the consideration of our inquiring brother and to our readers generally.

Middletown, N. Y.,
February 15, 1864.

ROMANS 5:12

Brother Beebe: – I wish to call your attention to an idea which I find near the bottom of the last column of page 187, No. 24, Vol. 31, which reads thus, – "By the offence of one man sin has entered into the world, and death by sin." etc. I cannot see, by the light I have, how that can be. I read that "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." I know it is a generally received idea; but there seems to be something in it that is not altogether clear to me; and, I therefore wish you to take up the subject as soon as may be convenient, if in your judgment the request is worth noticing; otherwise lay it aside and all will be right with me.

Yours in the best of bonds,
Abraham Foutch.
Vandalia, Iowa.
Jan. 12, 1864.

REPLY:

Any scriptural subject on which our brethren desire to be enlightened, we deem worthy of notice; and when in our power, to afford any light, it is a pleasure to do so. In this case however, we are unable to comprehend the difficulty in the mind of our brother. The words which he refers to were used by us in our article on the end of Volume thirty first; and were used as an argument to sustain the position assumed that, as the creatures of God, we, (the human family) have all sinned. We did not mark the argument as a literal quotation; but used it as a generally conceded deduction from the scriptures,

especially from several declarations of Paul, in Rom. 5:12,17,18,19. “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.” This text brother Foutch refers to as being clear; but our deduction from it, that by the offence of one man sin has entered into the world, and death by sin, is obscure to his mind. We may be wrong; let us examine.

It is then understood and admitted that, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin – and so death passed upon all men,” etc. Now how did sin enter by one man? Was it not by that one man’s offence? The words, sin, offence, and disobedience, are used as interchangeable, and in their bearing on this subject, of synonymous signification. In verse 12: He says that death came upon all men by sin, and that sin entered into the world by one man: in verse 16, he says by one that sinned, in verse 15, he says, “For, if through the offence of one many be dead,” etc., in verse 17: “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one”: and in verse 18: “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” We have misapprehended the meaning of these scriptures if they do not justify the conclusion, that, by the offence of one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. That death entered by sin, and by the sin of one man, is positively affirmed by the apostle, and that the sin by which death entered, is called the offence of one man, is equally clearly stated. Sin entered by one man; that is by one man’s offence, and brought condemnation and death upon all of his then unborn posterity; for as they were all in him undeveloped at the time of the offence, they were in him partakers of the transgression, and consigned to death as the consequence.

Observe, in this *fifth* chapter of Romans, Paul was comparing and contrasting the two Adams, the one of the earth earthy; the second is the Lord from heaven. The earthy Adam, Paul says, is the figure of him that was to come. The earthy Adam then embodying all his undeveloped posterity. The whole human family were a unity in him; consequently they all acted in him, sinned in him, and were made sinners by his transgression, and in this way, sin, and judgment to condemnation, and death entered into the world.

The second Adam, the spiritual progenitive head of the spiritual family or posterity, or seed, embodied them all in himself before the world began, and as sin, condemnation and death came by the one earthly Adam, so justification unto life and immortality came by the second, or anti-typical Adam; to all his seed. The seed of the earthly Adam embraced all who are born of the flesh, his whole posterity. The seed of the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, embraces a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation; a peculiar people, who shall show forth his praise. “A seed shall serve him, it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation.” (Psalms 22:30) “And he shall see his seed.” (Isa. 53:10)

Middletown, N. Y.,
March 1, 1864.



HEBREWS 7:25

Eld. G. Beebe: – I would like to have you write something, if you think it best, on Heb. 7:25, especially on the last clause, “Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Yours respectfully,
Silas H. Durand.
Wilkesbarre, Pa.
Feb. 23, 1864.

Reply: – The great theme of the inspired writer of this epistle was to set forth the Mediatorial glory of the Son of God, in the complete salvation of his people, especially the immortality of his priesthood. Although typified by the Levitical priesthood, he was not a priest of the order or lineage of Aaron, but of the order of Melchisedec. In comparing and contrasting the two orders, he shows that the one was but a dim shadow of the other. And perhaps no point of difference is more prominently presented than that of the mortality of the one and the immortality of the other. Aaron and his sons, without an oath, were made priests by the law of a carnal commandment: that is by the Levitical law, which was given to the carnal Hebrews, or fleshly descendants of Abraham, regarding them in the flesh, as mortal; and soon to pass away. The ceremonial law was also limited, and to pass away with the generations of Israel in the flesh; and the priesthood to agree with the carnal, transient and dying sons of Jacob, was by the law of a carnal commandment, involving perpetual changes in the priesthood; none of the priests of that order could continue long in the office by reason of death; for in it men were made priests who had infirmities in common with the rest of mankind, – were like all others, subject to disease and death. But the great High Priest of our profession was not made a priest after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For the priests under the law were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they, truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death; but this man, (Christ) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. The perfect and everlasting salvation of all who come unto him, rests upon the efficiency of his priesthood based upon the power of his immortality, or endless life. If he were not the life, the endless or eternal life of his people, there could be no vital relationship to give character and efficiency to his standing as the “High Priest of our profession.” If the relation he bore to those for whom he officiated at the altar, were only that which resulted from his being made of a woman, or his assumption of our nature, taking on him the seed of Abraham, and being found in fashion as a man; the law of a carnal or fleshly commandment would have been sufficient; but then his priesthood could do no more than that of Aaron or his sons. This would involve the unscriptural idea that his priestly office did not exist until his incarnation. How then could it be after the order of Melchisedec, which type signifies a priesthood that is without beginning of days or end of life? To qualify him with the power of an endless life:...a life which is without beginning of days, or end of duration, that life must be eternal, self-existent, and self-sustaining. Such a life Christ has as the Son of God: it is the life of God himself, and is therefore from everlasting to everlasting. “Who is the blessed and only Potentate; the King of kings, and Lord of lords: who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, or can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting, Amen.” By this power of immortality he is able to vanquish death and him that had the power of death, and to deliver his people from wrath, raise them up to heavenly places in himself. Through this “Eternal Spirit,” or

life of God, he offered himself, as our abiding High Priest, without spot unto God, and “By one offering forever perfected them that are sanctified.” The body in which he suffered and died on the cross was not permitted to see corruption: it was raised up by the power of his endless life, quickened with his own immortality; death hath no more dominion over it. Thus in that resurrected body he has passed into the heavens; angels and all holy beings are in subjection to him. But the power of the endless life of his Priesthood is most gloriously displayed also in his Intercession for his people. We do not, however, understand, as many represent, that as our High Priest, his Intercession consists in his standing literally in the courts of his eternal Father, pleading, and endeavoring to overcome some supposed reluctance on the part of the Father, to procure blessings for us; for as a Priest his work was to do the will of the Father, and to finish the work. There is perfect harmony in the priesthood and the immutable will of God. But by the power of the immortality of his priesthood, he by the eternal spirit of life is the vitality of all his members, and by the power of his endless life he dwells in all his quickened children, and in their hearts indites and carries on his intercession. Ever living, not only for them, but living in them, by this spirit and power of immortality, helping their infirmities he maketh intercession for and in them, according to the will of God, and with groanings that they cannot utter.

We find one of this intercession flowing from our hearts, directed by the light or power of our mortal life. We may have been taught from infancy to say our prayers; and like the Pharisee, pray with ourselves; but we could not draw near unto God, nor find access to the throne of grace until this power of endless life was manifested in us. When by the new and spiritual birth we passed from death into this endless life; when Christ, who is our life was revealed in us, that moment his intercession, by the power and vitality of that life, in us began to be experimentally developed. A hidden secret groaning of the quickened child, was struggling for adequate language, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” “What shall I do to be saved?” “Save Lord, I perish.” This intercession is by the power of an endless life; there is vitality and immortality in it. And the power of endless life which makes the quickened, heaven-born sinner cry to God for mercy and grace, is the same power which has delivered him from death, and formed Christ in him, the hope of glory. This life, which is not only from Christ, but which is Christ, makes intercession for us. Not only when in our first or early experience, we were made to stand in our experience, guilty, wretched, bankrupt and utterly ruined before the bar of our Eternal Judge; when the begotten intercession of our heart struggled for birth; but throughout our whole experience, we find that we can have no access to the throne of grace, nor draw nigh unto God with a true heart and full assurance of faith, only as we are moved by this power of the endless life of our great High Priest. “No man can come unto the Father but by me.” When our carnal passions prevail, and in the most solemn forms, we give expression to the fleshly desires of the natural mind, “We ask and we receive not; because we ask amiss.” God in great mercy rejects such graceless, heartless, lifeless prayers. But when the spirit of Christ which dwells in all his children, directs us to the throne of grace; we find access through him who is our life, and are made partakers of the power of his endless life; and then we find our nature with all its boasted wisdom and eloquence cannot supply language to adequately utter the heaven inspired intercession which the endless life of Christ awakens in our hearts.

The holy anointing by which Aaron in the type was made a priest, was poured upon the head, even Aaron’s head, and ran down his beard, and descended to the skirts of his garment; so Christ our Priest, is consecrated as our Priest, by the Spirit of the Lord God which is upon him, with all the power of his endless life, and the holy unction through him as our spiritual head, descends to the hem of his garment, which covers his mystical body, for we are told (Rev. 1:13) that his priestly garment clothed his body, down to the foot; and therefore an inspired witness testifies, “But ye have an unction from the Holy One,” (Christ) “and ye know all things.” “But the anointing which ye have received abideth in

you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no life, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” (I John 2:20 & 27)

Thus in the unity and identity of Christ, our Great High Priest, and his church as his body, and the fullness of him who filleth all in all, his members are all made kings and priests, unto him, and they shall reign with him in glory.

In this vital and endless unction, the prayers and intercessions for the saints, in the spirit emanating from the power of his endless life, identify them with him in the priesthood; not as successors, as the sons of Aaron were to him; but as his members identified and constituting his priestly body; quickened and animated by the power of the same endless life, are *in him* a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people. In this union and life being made priests unto God, the prayers and intercession of the saints are offered up upon the golden altar which John saw before the throne. (Rev. 8:3)

In conclusion, He is able to save them unto the uttermost, who come unto God by him. The ability of his priesthood, as we have seen, is in the power of his endless, or immortal, self-existing, independent and eternal life. All who are made partakers of this life, are saved by its power. The specialty of the Priesthood is restricted to the extent of this life. None but our “Blessed Potentate” hath it. No man or human power can approach it, or even see it; but it is through him bestowed on all the members of his body. “I give unto them eternal life.” (John 10:28) “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37) These scriptures show very clearly who they are that come unto the Father by Christ, and our text declares his ability, by the power of an endless life, to save *them* unto the uttermost. Not partially, but fully, completely. And he is as willing as he is able. “Father, I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24) This is the extent of the Priesthood of Christ; it embraces all whom the Father has given him, and no more; and they are saved unto the uttermost, by the power of his endless life which they are partakers of, and by which they come unto the Father; while all who are laboring to approach the Father by their own works, or relying on any thing else for salvation, are not manifestly of his priesthood. His Priesthood is specially and exclusively for them who come unto God by him. For them, and only for them does he abide a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec; for them, and in them, he by the spirit and power of endless, eternal life, makes intercession – as the High Priest of their profession. Truly such an High Priest becomes us. Then let us duly consider the apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. (Heb. 3:1)

Middletown, N. Y.,
March 1, 1864.

END OF VOLUME V.

