

OLD SCHOOL WRITINGS OF J.F. JOHNSON

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EXODUS 3:1-6.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., January 13, 1877.

MY VERY DEAR BRETHREN G. & B.L. BEEBE: - In the first number of the present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES I discover the following request made: "If it is not asking too much, I would like to have the views of some of the ministering brethren on Moses' vision in Exodus 3:1-6. A.K." If you will not think it presuming in me, I will endeavor at least to gratify the wish of A.K.

Without tarrying to give a detailed history of Moses, I will simply say that he was a Jew, born in Egypt, which is in Africa; but at the time of seeing the vision he was in Midian in Asia, a refugee from Egypt for having slain an Egyptian in the defense of one of his brethren. Here he again avenges a wrong done to the daughters of Jethro, the Priest or Prince of Midian, which paves the way for his marriage to Zipparah, the Priest's daughter. In those instances he displays a disposition to avenge misdeeds, which was a specific trait of his peculiar character throughout his eventful life.

In the first verse on which our views are solicited it is said, "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the Priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." As Horeb signifies desert, solitude, &c., here is typically portrayed another trait of his character, that of a shepherd over a flock in a desert. In this capacity, as well as in others, he evidently exhibits a type of Christ, as he says in Deut.18:15 - "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken," &c. He not only kept the flock of Jethro in the desert, but as a Mediator vigilantly kept charge of the children of Jacob in their exodus from Egypt, and during their forty years travel in the wilderness. - Compare with Deut.32:9-12.

Verse 2: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Marvelous phenomenon! A bush burning with a flame of fire in the midst, and yet not consumed. I suppose that this bush, this strange sight, represents the church undergoing the "fiery trial that is to try her." "Behold, [saith the Lord,] I have refined thee, but not with silver, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Isa.48:10. And again, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, He is my God." Zech.13:9. Also see Isa.31:9 - "Whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem." The circumstance of this burning bush, unconsumed and

inconsumable, should inspire the children of Zion with intrepid courage and invincible confidence, however severe the fiery ordeal through which they may have to pass, for it can but refine them, for our Refiner ever sits in Zion to purify them, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. See Mal.3:3. It was the solace of poor, afflicted Job in his deep distress, that he could say, “When I am tried I shall come forth as gold,” for “the bush was not consumed.” What a wonder! Here is “an afflicted and poor people” in a world of relentless enemies, defenseless as to carnal weapons, their enemies praying for and predicting their speedy destruction, and destroying them at times by thousands, a burning fire in their midst; but wonderful to tell, instead of consuming them, it will carry on a purifying process that will eventually bring them forth pure as the virgin gold. In vain may the cohorts of anti-christ rave against the “little flock,” and boast of their numerical strength, and that they will soon have the whole world to throng their “broad road.” The Old School Baptists alone take courage in the fact that they enter the “strait gate” and the narrow way that but “few” find, but it *only* leads to life; yes, eternal life; and when we consider that the fiery trial is but a brief and momentary one, surely it “is not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”

“And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.” It *is* a great sight truly, why the bush is not burnt. It is yet an inexplicable sight to Moses’ disciples, and has been for many years. They used to say when I was a boy, more than sixty years ago, that these “old Hardshells will all be gone in a few years,” and they continue to say so yet. Mr. Benedict, the New School [so called] Baptist church historian, said many years ago, that before his stereotype edition reached the remote parts of our own country, “they would be among the things that were.” This, however, only proves to us the truth of what Moses said in Deut.33:29 – “thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee.”

I suppose it does seem so to them, because we have no nurseries [Sunday Schools] in which to raise our children for transplantation in our churches; no theological schools in which to manufacture preachers to “convert sinners;” no missionary boards, directors, or funds to prepare, equip and send out hirelings over sea and land to make graceless proselytes; and then on the other hand, “a consuming fire” burning in our midst all the time, how is it that we are not consumed? But fortunately for this people, this fire consumes nothing that is righteous; and were it not that their righteousness is of the Lord, that he is our righteousness, we should very soon be consumed. Take away their newly-constructed paraphernalia and men-made trappings, and then expose “Moses’ disciples” to such a fire, it would be as fatal to them as the sword of Samuel was to Agag.

“And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of

the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.” He “turned aside,” and this may teach us that the natural course of Moses [the law] is not the way to the church. There appears to be something very peremptory in this double call. Is Moses approaching forbidden ground? Yes, for the Lord says, “draw not nigh hither.” Is not this to teach us that by the works of the law, by Moses, we are not to approach to the church?

“Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” In the shoes of Moses, or walking in a law righteousness, we are not to approach the holy precincts of Zion, – must wear a different kind of sandals there, – be “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Yes, that is the way we must be shod to enter that hallowed sanctuary. The adobes of Babylon may be easily entered in Moses’ shoes. But such a fire as there is in Zion would play destruction with them, “filthy rags” and all. Moses’ day is past with Zion now; the anti-typical Joshua now takes the lead, and she must follow him. “Wherefore [says Paul] the law *was* [not *is*, as some say] our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal.3:24-29.

The law with its types and shadows was a directory to bring the children of Israel to Christ; and therefore it “stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation,” and no longer. But after faith is come we are no longer under Moses; he does not bring us to Christ now, for we are not under the law, but under grace. Rom.6:14. We must therefore put off Moses’ shoes, or the works of the law. Moses bore the ministration of death and condemnation, but they must not enter here, for we have a Mediator between Moses and us; therefore,

“Since my Savior stands between,
In garments dipp’d in blood,
Tis he instead of me is seen,
When I approach to God.”

Moses is not permitted to cross over Jordan and enter Canaan, [figurative of the gospel church,] but may climb Mount Nebo, where he could see the promised land; but the Lord says, “Thou shalt not go thither.” There he must die, and there the Lord buried him where he is not to be found. And in like manner, “The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached,” &c.,

and Moses is buried, “shall not go thither.” Hence the mandate, “Draw not nigh hither.”

“Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Much might be said on these conspicuous names, and the conspicuity of the characters they represent; but fearing that I am already being too prolix, a few brief remarks must suffice.

Abraham, [father of a great multitude,] the father of the faithful in all ages, [if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed,] is to be looked to as a pattern in many instances. The Lord says, “Look unto Abraham your father,” &c. Isa.51:2. Look at his insuperable faith when God promised him an heir. “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” Rom.4:19,20. Then when the Lord called upon him to immolate upon the fatal pile his only begotten son whom he loved, he seemed to forget the paternity of a loving father, and without a word of remonstrance or a moment’s delay, immediately set out to execute the tragical deed. What could he have thought of the promise of God [“In Isaac shall thy seed be called”] now, when he raised the deadly weapon to slay his son? How was it to be fulfilled? The apostle answers this question: “Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure;” for his faith is an invincible bulwark to stay Moses’ approach to the seed of Abraham. Well may we “look to Abraham our Father” in the time of trial.

“The God of Isaac.” In the mournful scene just related, no doubt Isaac prefigured the church. In thus being presented as a sacrifice we have no word of complaint, no act of resistance. How like the children of Abraham, when brought before the dread tribunal of God in our experience! The uplifted sword of justice seems ready to immolate us, but we dare not enter a word of complaint – we cannot resist, it is just. At this critical juncture the sacrificial Lamb is interposed and slain “instead” of us, as the ram caught in the thicket by the horns was slain “instead of Isaac.” Here is another insurmountable barrier to Moses. He has received all that is due him.

“And the God of Jacob.” Here is another of those prominent characters that shall stand out conspicuously to the anti-typical Israel, as “a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill.” In the first place he is a supplanter. He supplants his elder brother, obtains the blessing, but not by his good works, for he was a treacherous boy, but is placed in a position where “the elder shall serve the younger.” He becomes a wanderer and a refugee, and eventually is brought to the “house of God, and the very gate of heaven;” and then he becomes a prevailer, a prince of God. But in a wonderful encounter he is smitten in the hollow of his

thigh, and limps all his days afterward; but the Lord blesses him in a peculiar manner – promises him the land of Canaan with all its riches, which is typical of the gospel church. He is given the name Israel, [a prevailer with God,] entails it upon his entire posterity; and “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation;” and as before shown, Moses must not approach there.

“Therefore Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, fully authorized as a minister of condemnation to execute the rigorous sentences of the law even to death, without pity or mercy upon all that came under his ban, for the stern demands of justice must be administered without favor or affection; his undimmed eye sees every departure from absolute perfection, and his authoritative voice is, “Pay me that thou owest.” But as to the debt and demands of every description that he held against the church of God, [the burning bush,] the Redeemer of Israel has met, canceled, and fulfilled all to jot and tittle, and justice, even the justice of Moses, must defend her. Hence she will eventually “sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” For Moses as a servant must now be as potent in her defense in slaying every intruder that would harm her, as he was rigid in her condemnation when under the law; but now she is “not under the law, but under grace.” Moses is faithful in serving the church, and ever ready to unsheathe his glittering sword to smite the myrmidons of anti-christ, and cut off every other invader that intrudes upon the holy habitation. But Christ as a Son, over his own house, has rendered to Moses all that he claimed, and as the Days Man between that house and Moses; yes, and who dwells in that house, from whence his majestic voice is heard saying, “Draw not nigh hither.” Then, although the billows may roll and rage furiously, and the furnace burn vehemently, still he says, “When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.” Isa.43:2.

The foregoing remarks are submitted first, brethren editors, to your judgment; and if deemed worthy the space they may occupy in your columns, then to the consideration of A.K., and others who may examine them. Not having heard the views of any one else on the subject, and feeling my own insufficiency to expound the scriptures. I wish them submitted to the closest scrutiny.

Devotedly, your friend,

J. F. JOHNSON.

HEBREWS 6:4-6.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., March, 1877.

MY DEAR BRETHREN EDITORS: - I will endeavor to answer the request made in the present volume of the SIGNS, No.5, which is as follows:

“Will Elder J.F. Johnson please give his views on Hebrews 6:4-6?”

I have no special light on the subject referred to, nor can I have, unless it comes from “the Father of lights.” The connection reads, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame.” In order to a correct understanding of these verses, I think it well to refer to both the preceding and following connection.

Commencing the chapter, the apostle says, “Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do if God permit.” verses 1-3. Now we cannot suppose for a moment that the apostle would leave all these important matters with the view of abandoning them, not to return to them any more, but he leaves them simply for the sake of the cogent and convincing argument that follows. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened,” &c., “*if* they shall fall away,” &c. Ah, there is the little transitive verb *if*. “If they shall fall.” He does not say that it *is* possible for them to fall away, but *if* they shall. But what if they should fall away? Why, it would nullify, wipe out, and make void all that he had done for them. His crucifixion, his enlightening, giving them to taste the heavenly gift, to partake of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; his painful, shameful, ignominious death on the cross a total and entire failure, the light that he gave them would be merged in sable darkness, the beneficent gift of that life a total loss, the Holy Ghost of which they were made partakers piteously paralyzed, the good word of God tasted once with all its sweetness is lost in insipidity, the powers of the world to come, with all their potency, completely enervated – lost in imbecile debility. And what if he *should* be crucified afresh, or again? What evidence could we have of success then? If the first crucifixion was a failure, might not the second, the third, or an indefinite number be, as often as we should “fall from grace,” or fail to “use the means?” Surely this would be putting him to an open shameful death continually. How

shameful to the name of Jesus! To think that he could not finish his work at once and forever. He said, "It is finished," and we know that "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." "He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast." Workmongers endeavor to press this scripture into their conditional falling from grace theory; but it proves too much for them; for when their subjects "fall from grace," as they say, they use great efforts to renew them again to repentance; but this shows the impossibility of their success. Their theory represents the Savior as being like poor, fallen, feeble man, often failing to accomplish his work at the first trial, and as necessarily using the Yankee motto, "Try, try again," to complete his work.

But the apostle does not finally leave those important principles of the doctrine of Christ, but retakes them in the 9th and following verses, to show the impossibility of their falling away. He says, "But, brethren, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his promise, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec."

I make this lengthy quotation to show that the apostle, in leaving those important "principles of the doctrine of Christ" for the time being, was for the purpose of making one of the most convincing and irrefutable arguments in favor of them that we can possibly conceive of, and to show in the most palpable manner the futility and fallacy of the Arminian theory. But after exposing that absurdity, he returns to those principles, and their concomitant appendages, and shows unquestionably that where those principles and their adjuncts are found, the impossibility of falling away, because their standing rests not upon works like those of men, which are done and undone, and then have to be done over again, but upon the immutable promise and oath of God, in which it was impossible for him

to lie, therefore our consolation may appropriately be called “a strong consolation.” Then, when we can flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, what a hope! Well might the apostle say, on another occasion, that the Lord had “given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.” And what a refuge, too! “The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” That hope serves as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered. That forerunner is Jesus, the “Rock of Ages;” and the anchor grapple into that Rock serves as an all-sufficient safeguard against the winds, the tempests, the waves and the fire, and insures our safe, triumphant entrance into the heavenly harbor, the ecstatic haven of a peaceful, perpetual, eternal rest.

“We trust upon the sacred word,
The oath and promise of the Lord;
And safely through the tempest sail;
The christian’s hope shall never fail.”

The effectual work of this Apostle and High Priest of our profession is an ample and efficient guarantee, and secures to us forever all the promises, gifts and graces that make up and constitute the “doctrine of Christ.”

“I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing shall be added to it, nor anything taken from it.” If he enlightens us, then, none can add anything to that super-human light, none can diminish it. If he has bestowed upon us a spiritual gift, none can add to, not take from it. If the gift of the Holy Ghost, “He shall abide with us forever;” no addition, no taking from him. If we have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, cursed be he who adds to or takes from that word, and palsied be the arm that attempts to add to or take from that power. Our High Priest, to secure all this to us, has “done marvelous things; his right hand and holy arm have gotten him the victory;” and now let incessant beams of praise break from every tongue, and emotions of joy swell every heart.

Now, brother Riggs, I have tried very briefly to answer your request, and submit the result to our brethren editors. Yours to serve,

J. F. JOHNSON.

GOLAN: DEUT. 4:43.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., 1878.

DEAR BRETHREN EDITORS: - Some time ago I used the above word as a text after which several brethren earnestly requested me to write as nearly as I could the sentiments advanced on that occasion. I penciled down as well as I could the substance of what I said, but concluded that it was not worth the room it would occupy in the SIGNS, and that I would not send it. The brethren however have recently renewed the request, and I have finally concluded to place it at your disposal. The verse containing the word reads as follows: "Namely, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan of the Manassites."

These are all three significant names, and I think appropriately represent the church in its different phases, as well as Christ her only refuge, for they are the names of places of refuge. In the preceding connection it is said, "Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan toward the sunrising, that the slayer might flee thither which should kill his neighbor unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live; namely, Bezer," &c. This name *Bezer* signifies vine, branches; no doubt alluding to Christ the Vine, and the members his church, the branches. The name *Ramoth* means eminences, high places; I suppose prefiguring the church "set on a hill," according to Matt.5:14, or "established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills." See Micah 4:1; also Psalm 68:15. "The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill, as the hill of Bashan."

Next, we call attention to the name more particularly under consideration, *Golan*; which, like the others, has a two-fold signification; namely, *passage*, *revolution*. Indeed, we may say it has a three-fold signification, for it was a city of refuge.

Should we present the true, biblical sense of the subject, it will no doubt pertinently correspond with the experience of the children of God.

But; first, this word *Golan* signifies passage; but the word *passage* has different meanings, but here we must use it in the sense of transition, or passing from one place or state to another.

Now, if the saints will retrospect their former standing in their fallen head, and then can realize their present standing in their risen Head and in his church, and lastly, their supernal location in their final and celestial abode, they have this passage portrayed in a nutshell. But should we undertake to trace the whole journey, and particularize the many eventful scenes connected therewith, it would

take volumes to exhibit them. It is first, passing from death to life. I need not attempt to note all the circumstances connected with this passage. Brethren, sisters, recount your former exercises, and note them as evidences of that passage. It is a toilsome and trying passage, accompanied with a terrible warfare. But amid the din of battle, hark! I hear a cheering voice. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is *passed from death unto life.*" This is an important step in our passage along the journey of our pilgrimage, but it is often but the goal of an ordeal through which we must pass – a road thickly beset with severe trials, alluring temptations, deep tribulations, and many other fearful forebodings.

But notwithstanding this seemingly fearful array of relentless foes, we may with holy boldness gird on our armor, unfurl our banner to the breeze, for victory will assuredly perch upon that banner set up "in the name of our God." Although a fearful catalogue of enemies environ and dwell in us, the encouraging and cheering voice of the Captain of our salvation, saying, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Savior," [Isa.43:1-3] should cause us to "thank God and take courage," for we shall pass through the waters, the rivers, the fire and flames unharmed; for "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and are safe."

"We're passing through a dreary wilderness,
Oft weary, heavy laden and distressed;
But grace supports us o'er the toilsome road,
And faith insures us final rest with God."

Again; notwithstanding we are continually waging this uncompromising war with countless hosts of insidious foes, not one of our Captain's faithful soldiers have ever been destroyed, or even harmed. Then,

"If the passage is gloomy and seems to alarm,
Be fearless, be faithful, you'll suffer no harm."

Sometimes it is needful that we should pass under the rod, for he scourges all his children, but this is for our good, and a proof that we are not bastards, but sons. "And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and will bring you into the bond of the covenant." Ezek.20:37. The bond of this covenant can never be broken, it is an everlasting covenant, "ordered in all things and sure." This covenant secures a safe

conduct or passage through the whole journey of our weary pilgrimage, and a safe and felicitous ingress into the desired haven.

But this word *Golan* also signifies revolution, and a revolution is a great change in government, or, a deliverance from one code of law, and a placing under another or different code, constituting a complete transition. Witness for instance our revolutionary struggle with Great Britain. In that encounter we were delivered from the law of England, and eventually brought under the law or government of the United States. This was effected by a seven-year struggle of the people. But the revolution that we have under consideration is radically different in many respects. And first, suppose that the people of the United States had went to work on the Arminian plan, that is, by serving under, and obeying the laws of the mother country to the letter, and suppose that they had succeeded and pacified the tumult in that way, would that have produced a revolution? By no means; they would still have remained under the same law, as do workmongers by endeavoring to obey the law of Moses, or to be saved by their works.

But secondly, the American Revolution was accomplished by the united effort of the people. It was temporal, not spiritual; it cannot survive the ravages of time. Not so with this revolution. It is true in the first place, that Jesus strictly obeyed the law in all its exactions, but his obedience alone never could have effected a revolution. That law was violated by all his people, and a violated law knows no mercy – no mitigation short of the penalty annexed to the transgression. If the crime is a capital one, capital punishment must ensue, and when that is executed the law stops there. If an individual commits a capital offense in our country, the law says he shall hang until he is dead, and when dead, that law is a dead letter to that person, it can pursue him no further, it matters not how atrocious his crime may have been; the law ends there. As before observed, Christ's people have all violated the law of God, their crime is a capital one – the penalty is death.

Now, Christ and his people are actually, absolutely and inseparably one. He, bearing their sins in his own body [and his people are his body] on the tree, was crucified, and consequently they were crucified with him; hence, they become dead to the law, the law is dead to them, and can pursue them no further; just as soon would our capital code pursue the man that is hung by the head until he is dead. Of the correctness of these facts we have abundant testimony in the scriptures; we need refer to but a few texts. See Rom.7:5,6 – “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Again, “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” &c. Gal.2:19,20. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every

one that believeth.” Rom.10:4. “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Does not this constitute a thorough and complete revolution? Under the law of sin and death, bound by its manacles and fetters, sin reigns, pursues us, reigns even to death, but there the dominion of the law of sin ends; but now the thorough transition, the great change in our condition takes place, and we are brought under another, a different, and an infinitely superior dominion. Grace triumphs now, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, brought under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that makes us free from the law of sin and death. But further; this revolution was not consummated, as ordinary ones are, by the efforts, struggles and exertions of the people at large. One champion encounters all the hosts of the adversary, and a terrible combat ensues. What a solemn, awe-inspiring scene here confronts us! One solitary, care-worn, marred-visaged individual on the one hand, defenseless, as to carnal weapons, unaided by helpers of any kind; but faced and opposed by hosts of relentless and bloodthirsty enemies, in combination with cohorts of the most powerful earthly government in existence. Suppose the millions of his people could have stood by and looked upon the grand, imposing scene, not knowing the final result, but thoroughly convinced that their eternal destiny hung upon the final event. Now, behold! A banditti gathers round him, armed with weapons of death; no resistance on his part; he is led before an auditory of his most deadly enemies; no objection is made. He is there smitten upon the cheek; no complaint. Thence he is led away to another auditory, vested with authority to take his life; no murmuring. Robbed of his clothing, and a mock robe placed upon him; no evasion. A crown of thorns is ruthlessly fixed upon his head; he calmly submits. Then he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; he opens not his mouth. Next he is led to the place of execution, as a sheep before her shearers; he is dumb. And then, O tragical scene! With cruel severity his hands and his feet are pierced, jagged nails fasten him to the terrible cross, and there, by a painful, lingering, disgraceful and most cruel death, his life is taken away; and there is the end of the law. It can pursue neither him nor his people in him further. Is not this a complete transition? Here, then, we are delivered from the law, “that being dead wherein we were held;” not by violently opposing, disobeying, and forcibly throwing off the law, as did the American people in our revolution; for the law of sin and death from which we were delivered was holy, just and good, and our God, a “just God and a Savior,” could not disobey or violate a just and holy law. He therefore fulfilled it by suffering its penalty, after obeying it to the letter in behalf of his people. Now they are brought under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes them free from the law of sin and death; and this constitutes a thorough revolution, a complete *GOLAN* for his people.

But further; this *Golan* was a place of refuge and safety for those who were

pursued by their enemies, or the avengers of blood. Here, too, is a symbol of the safety of the city of our God. The Lord dwells in this city, and he is her palladium, her safety, her everlasting and all-sufficient refuge. See Ps.57:1; 59:16; 71:7. “The eternal God is her refuge, his everlasting arms are underneath to support her.” Walls of salvation protect her, mountains are round about, forming invulnerable fortifications to defend her. The place of defense for this is the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given them, their waters shall be sure. Isaiah 33:16. In their majestic Head is treasured an everlasting plenitude to supply their wants, with the sure mercies of David to relieve their suffering. What an asylum for the oppressed, the laboring, the heavy-laden pilgrim; and can we not say, with David, “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple.” Psa.27:4.

“Here would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger or a guest,
But like a child at home.”

Yours to serve,

J. F. JOHNSON.

LUKE 16:9.

Lawrenceburg, Ky., 1878.

BRETHREN EDITORS: - I have been requested by a friend in New York [whether a brother or not I am not informed] to give my views on the text heading this article.

I am not certain that my views on the text are correct, for they are different from the views of some of my brethren whom I consider my superiors both in intellect and acquirements. I will simply try to give what my friend has asked for, my “views,” hoping that my friend and others who may examine them will strictly scrutinize those views, and detect the error, should there be any.

Then, first, let us attend to the signification of this word “mammon.” Those whose views I have noticed on the subject have generally confined its meaning to money, wealth, &c. Although riches may be taken as a part of its meaning, it is not all. In addition to that it signifies, according to Webster, “a place where something is hid; a subterranean storehouse; the god of liberty.” I cannot conclude that the

word *mammon* here simply means wealth, because the plural pronoun *they*, [they may receive you,] as used in the following connection, cannot correctly be applied to money or wealth; therefore we must apply to it a different signification. Then, suppose we conclude that the word here means, as Webster says, “a place where something is hid;” then the question would be, Where is that place? I think it was among the Gentiles. Now, we know that the Lord had a people among the Gentile nations, and that they were not yet manifested; but were a purchased possession, therefore “hid” from the mortal gaze. We know also, that the Jewish disciples were finally received into the different branches of the church among the Gentiles, and therefore received “into everlasting habitations,” for I know of no other everlasting habitation in this world but the church; but “it shall stand forever,” “shall never be destroyed.”

The Savior doubtless had a specific object in giving his disciples this command and instruction, and it seems evident to me that this object was to inform them that they would fail to find friends among the Jews, and therefore must seek to make them among the Gentiles; for the Jews were then becoming their most inveterate enemies. Will not the preceding connection justify this conclusion? In the commencement of the fifteenth chapter we are informed that the publicans and sinners [Gentiles] drew near to hear him; “and the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” Then he spake to them the parable of the lost sheep, of his leaving the ninety-nine “in the wilderness,” finding and bringing home the lost one, of the rejoicing over it more than over the ninety and nine that “need no repentance.” Then comes the parable of the woman sweeping her house in search of her piece of silver that was lost; and when she finds it, calls her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her. Next we have the parable of the prodigal son and his elder brother, the prodigal to represent the reception of the Lord’s perishing children of the Gentiles, and the elder son the Jews, and their opposition to the bestowment of any favors to the Gentiles.

Immediately before addressing the disciples in the language of the text, he presents the case of the unjust steward, who I suppose still portrays the Jew and his religion, which is a fac-simile of the Arminian and his religion today. This unjust steward taught his lord’s debtors that they need not pay all they owed, a part would do, and so he was received into their houses. Just so with latter-day workmongers. They get into favor with their dupes by telling them, “O, do the best you can; the rest can be looked over.” In one respect, however, they are a little more ridiculous than was the unjust steward. He could not dig, to beg he was ashamed; neither can they *dig*, but they are not ashamed to beg; they *can* beg with a looseness.

If we confine the meaning of the word *mammon* to riches, I can see no propriety in the language of the passage. How is money, wealth, riches, to receive persons into everlasting habitations? But if we apply the word to the Gentiles, all seems to

me plain. When Paul testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ, [at Corinth,] “And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles.” Acts 18:5,6. Again, “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” They went to the Gentiles, were received into the churches – received into everlasting habitations, and there found friends.

This instruction was calculated to have a salutary effect on those Jewish disciples in another respect. It is well known that there was a deep-seated prejudice in the minds of Jews, even the Jewish disciples, against the Gentiles. Witness the case of Peter at Joppa, when directed to go to the Gentiles. See Acts 10:14 &c. Letting the disciples know that they would fail among the Jews, and directing them to make to themselves friends of the Gentiles was well calculated to break down that prejudice. It did break it down, and was a matter of joy to the Jewish brethren to learn that God had “granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life.” This brought about a lasting peace and fraternal friendship; so that in this mountain [the church] they were to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Micah 4:3. Here they may meet in a delightful asylum, a friendly sanctuary, where the same Lord over all is rich unto all, both Jew and Gentile that call upon him, making no difference between them. Thus is consummated the assertion of the Savior, saying, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.” John 10:16. And again, says the apostle, “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” Eph.2:14,15. Since this middle wall of partition, the hand-writing of ordinances, is taken out of the way, nailed to the cross, the spiritually enlightened Jew and christianized Gentile can, as friends, fraternize each other, and amicably sit down in the same sanctuary, and mutually worship the one same God in fellowship and friendship.

The foregoing views are the best I have; examine them critically, and indorse or reject them, as the scriptures may justify or condemn.

Most respectfully,

J. F. JOHNSON.

JOHN 1:7 & 9.

Clay Village, Ky., Feb. 1879.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - In the 18th number, past volume of the SIGNS, I found the following request:

“Will Elder J. F. Johnson please give his views, through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, on John 1:7 & 9?

G. Blaydis.”

We may give our views on the mysterious, sublime and momentous connection, but to comprehend the profound and majestic secret reaches far beyond the ken of all human knowledge, however aided by the most erudite attainments possible for man to arrive at. The subject reads as follows:

7th verse – “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all [men] through him might believe.”

9th verse – “That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

The apostle says, “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh,” &c. In the connection we have this manifestation brought to view, but I approach it “with fear and trembling.” In the commencement of the chapter it is said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In the 14th verse it is said, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” &c. Mysterious unity. The same character is elsewhere called the Son of God. I John 5:20. “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

In the verse preceding the first one named in the request it is said, “There was a man sent from God whose name was John.” He is elsewhere called “John the Baptist.” Here we have the origin of the Baptists thus called. Others have their *Johns*, &c., from whom they derive their names. The Methodists, for instance, have their John Wesley; the Calvinists [or Presbyterians] have also their John Calvin. So we might trace the names down to the origin of the New School, [Baptists as they call themselves, but it is a misnomer] and they have their Andrew Fuller to head their clan. Then we might refer to the head or starting point of the Campbellites, and they have their Alexander. All these say that the Lord has

wonderfully blessed them, because of the rapidity of their increase. Well, if that is good evidence, Joe Smith and Brigham Young have the best of them all. But we have not the slightest evidence that either or any of them were “sent from God,” as was John the Baptist. But God named him, in the temple, when he was promised. And when the child was born, and his mother’s neighbors and cousins visited her, and came to circumcise him, they called Zacharias, after his father. And his mother said, Not so. And they made signs to his father how he would have him called. “And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name *is* John;” for the Lord had named him in the temple.

He came for a witness, to bear witness of the light. That is the legitimate business of the true Baptists yet. All the others have a different mission. Their prime and great mission is to convert sinners to God, as they say. Now, we defy them to prove by the scriptures that there ever was a sinner converted to God, in the sense in which they use the expression, by preaching the gospel, by the apostles or any one else. But the Baptists merely bear witness of the light. Jesus, after opening the understanding of his servants, said unto them, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. *And ye are witnesses of these things.*” Luke 24:45-49. Paul said, “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing,” &c. Acts 26:22. Again, “And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8. In fact, “To him gave all the prophets witness,” forming one dense cloud of witnesses. The Old and New Testaments, as I conceive, form the embodiment of all the testimony of Jesus, and are the two anointed ones that stand by the God of the whole earth. Zech.4:14. “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Rev.19:10.

“That all men through him might believe.” The *all* here [men being a supplied word] simply brings to view “every man that cometh into the [spiritual] world” named in the next verse, and not all that come into the natural world; for there are some that believe not, because they are not Christ’s sheep. John 10:26. There were also others that “could not believe, because that Esaias said, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts,” &c. John 12:39,40. There is but one way to believe on Christ, and that is *through him*. Jesus said, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” John 6:39. It is therefore not the work of man; for his people “believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,” &c. Eph.1:19,20. We can believe on him by no power short of that. Our belief is not under our control at all, for we can believe nothing until compelled by the force of evidence. But says one, “It is just as easy to believe in Jesus as the Savior, as it is to believe

that Washington and his army saved us from the British yoke.” Why don’t you believe it then, Mr. Arminian? “Why, I do believe it.” No, you don’t believe any such thing. You may believe that he has done, or will do, a part of the work, if you will “use the means” and perform your part well. If you were as honest as was the old Quaker of Indiana, the argument might stop here. He hated the Old School Baptists, as all other work mongers do, and his wife wished to unite with us; but he told her if she did, he would sell his farm, leave her, and never live with her another day. The old lady was soon upon her death-bed; but before she died, she sent her love to me, with a request that I should preach on the occasion of her funeral, naming the text she wished used, and desired the services to be had at the old residence, “if the old man would allow it.” When the old gentleman’s consent was asked, he said, “I can’t tell thee now, I must study about it.” He finally gave his consent. Some days after the services were over, he was asked what he thought of Johnson’s preaching. “Well,” said he, “the man proved everything he said, by the scriptures, and therefore it must be true; but I can’t believe it, nor will I believe it.” If, therefore, as before observed, the workmongers were as honest as the old “Friend” was, and would tell their dupes that they can’t nor won’t believe the truth, [for they know we preach it] they would probably not deceive so many of them, and would tell the truth for once at least.

Now this word “all” is both an adjective and a noun, and is generally a qualifying term, and very seldom signifies all mankind, in the scriptures, or in common parlance. The connection in which it stands must determine its extent, and if we will notice the 11th, 12th and 13th verses of this chapter, we will see who constitute those that believe. There it is said, “He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” There are the “all men” that “through him might believe,” and no one ever did or will believe on him before being born of God. As well might we conclude that the natural unborn infant would recognize and believe on its father.

“That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” This is supernatural light – supernal in its nature. With all the vision of the natural man it has never been seen. Our God is the Father of lights; hence there is more than one. Perhaps we have not a more brilliant type of the Sun of Righteousness than the natural sun. Its solar rays enable us to see all that the natural eye looks upon. “In them [the natural heavens] hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” No doubt but Christ is the Bridegroom here portrayed. This Sun throws out deeper, more penetrating light than does our solar system: “a light above the brightness of the sun.” The natural sun only exhibits to our natural eyes the

external or surface of things; but the true light penetrates the deep recesses of our inward faculties. Not a secret thought lurks there concealed from it. It is by this light only that we see that “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” It is a synonym with life. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” When therefore we have that light, we have life, and can feel our sinful carnality. This light is no false glare – no ignis-fatuus, or Jack-a-lanern, but “the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the [spiritual] world.” This text is claimed by Arminians, who try to make it appear that every man that comes into the natural world is illuminated by this light. Now, to stop the mouths of those gainsayers, as well as to instruct the saints, I will venture to give the definition of this word “world,” as defined by lexicographers, and proved by the scriptures. And first, the word signifies *the whole universe* – John 1:10; *the posterity of Adam* – Rom.5:12; *all believers* – John 6:33; *all the elect* – I John 2:1; *the non-elect* – John 14:17 & 17:9; *the present life* – I Cor.7:33; *the earth* – Matt.4:8; *pomp and glory* – Gal.6:14; *carnal wisdom* – I Cor.2:12; *celestial happiness* – Luke 20:35; *great multitudes* – John 12:19; *the Roman empire* – Luke 2:1; *the Gentiles only* – Rom.11:12; *riches, honors, dignities* – I John 2:15.

There are certainly a spiritual and a natural world spoken of in the scriptures. The spiritual world has its spiritual Sun to illuminate it, and the natural world has its natural sun to give it light. Every man therefore that is born into the spiritual world, with spiritual eyes sees and knows the things of the Spirit; and every man that is born into the natural world, with natural eyes, sees and knows the things of nature. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, [or spiritual world] neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

In order that we may see, know and appreciate the things of this spiritual world, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” What a glorious light of an all-glorious world, and what wonders it displays to its inhabitants. This is the world from which he “taketh away the sin of it.” John 1:29. This is the world that “God so loved that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. And, the world that through him might be saved. Verse 17. This is the world too, that Christ is the Savior of. John 4:42. This is the whole world also that he is the propitiation of the sins of. I John 2:2. And “this is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

It is an uncontroverted fact that each of these suns throws its light where it shines independently of the means or instrumentalities of men. Who can cause the natural sun to shine on our side of the globe at midnight? Or what would we think of a man that would profess to take the light of the natural sun from a place where it does shine, and carry it to a place where it does not? Would we not at once

conclude that he is a maniac or an idiot? There is just as much spiritual mania and idiocy with those who profess to take the light of the Sun of Righteousness from America, and carry it to Burma, Hindustan, Africa, or any other place where it does not shine.

But the brightest sheen of that luminous Sun is not to be seen here. It would dazzle mortal eyes with immortal splendor. Here we can only “see in part.”

“But O! that brighter world above,
Where lives and reigns eternal love.”

There the glorious Sun will shine, with brilliant, beautiful lustre, where with immortal vision we can look upon, “see him as he is, and be like him.” Then let us, while here, endure with patience the somber clouds, the murky mists and gloomy fogs that obscure our sky and darken our pathway, and sing,

“Though darkness and distress my share,
Give me to trust thy guardian care;
Enough for me if light divine,
At length through every cloud shall shine.”

Your brother and friend indeed,

J. F. JOHNSON.

I CORINTHIANS 1:23,24.

Clay Village, Ky., April 1879.

BRETHREN BEEBE: - With your permission, I will try to comply with the request of brother Nathan Hart, of New Jersey, which is that I should give my views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on I Cor.1:23,24, which reads as follows: “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

Paul dedicates this epistle “to them that are sanctified [set apart] in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” He exhorts them to be of the same mind and of the

same judgment. He has been informed that there are contentions among them. One is of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas, and another of Christ. He asks them if Christ is divided – if Paul was crucified for them? He points out one prime object in the preaching of the gospel. It was not to convert sinners to God, or make christians of them, as the Arminians now say, but that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. He also informs us that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. He then asks, “Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” He then says, “After that [after he has made foolish the wisdom of this world] in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Not to save sinners or unbelievers from their sins, as work-mongers think, but to save or deliver believers from those divisions and other errors to which they are incident. He further says, “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.” The Jews required some tangible evidence that natural minds could comprehend; but Christ told them, when they called on him for a sign, that there should be no sign given them but the sign of Jonas the prophet, which was a very portentous one; but they failed to understand it. The Greeks seek after wisdom, but by that worldly wisdom they could not know God; it must be made foolish before the preaching of the cross could profit them in any degree.

“But we [who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints] preach Christ crucified.” This is a part of the subject on which my brother requests me to write; and O that mine now could be the “pen of a ready writer,” that I could even do half justice to the momentous, all-important theme.

Christ crucified has been the excessive joy, the rapturous enthusiasm of the saints in all ages. Patriarchs and prophets looked forward through the vista of long succeeding ages with emotions of thrilling ecstasy, with assurances and the most soothing anticipations that a crucified Savior was their first and last and only, but steadfast hope of salvation from their sins. “They saw his day, and were glad.” By faith they saw him wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities. They had his infallible promise that he would “ransom them from the power of the grave, redeem them from death.” Hosea 13:14. Those holy seers knew they had all gone astray, but that the Lord had laid on him all their iniquity. Isa.53:6. What a scene for those holy men of God! By faith they could behold the beloved, the dearly beloved Son of God, brilliant with the lustrous glory which he had with the Father before the world was, far, far beyond the reach of enemies to annoy or dangers to threaten him, leave that super-mundane residence, and plunge into this wretched world of suffering, misery, degradation and death. What incentive could have moved the dear Redeemer to condescend to such unparalleled

humility? It was LOVE; love was the great moving cause. But love for who? For friends who would lay down their lives for him? No; but for cruel enemies, traitors, rebels. These were the ones for whom he died.

“What pangs are these that tear his heart?
What burden’s this that’s on him laid?
What means this agony of smart?
What makes our maker hang his head?

‘Tis justice with its iron rod,
Inflicting strokes of wrath divine;
‘Tis the vindictive hand of God,
Incens’d at all your sins and mine.”

Amazing, wondrous, unparalleled condescension! It was love, unalterable love that brought the dear Redeemer down from his supernal abode of excellency,

“To suffer in the sinner’s place,
To die for man. Surprising grace!”

Yes, he was “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal.4:4,5. Notwithstanding all our defilement and wicked rebellion that love could undergo no alternation. As soon could God cease to love his dearly beloved and only begotten Son, as he could the rest of his children. See John 17:23,24. Even sin, hateful as it is in his sight, could never stop the current or change the course of the love of God to his people, disobedient and rebellious as we are. Nay, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Did not wait for us to cease to be sinners and perform a certain routine of good works, that he might save us; that is Arminianism; hence they do not believe that Christ came into the world to save sinners. No; they must cease to be sinners before he will save them. Now we believe that “*there is something done for the sinner.*” “He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” I Tim.1:15. And that salvation was effectually finished by his crucifixion. “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12. Well may we then “preach Christ crucified.”

But we are not to conclude that his suffering on the Roman cross constituted all his crucifixion. See what he endured in the garden of Gethsemane, when he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Here was a cross indeed. In

fact, his whole life, from his bed in the manger to his grave, was one continued cross. His people are frequently commanded to bear their cross, take it daily and follow him. Matt.10:3; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23, and many other places. But those commands did not signify that they were to bear the Roman cross, made of wood. Our old man is to be crucified continually, and the apostles could rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Acts 5:41.

But in Jerusalem and on Calvary was a tragical, terrible cross, where he was overwhelmed, immersed, baptized in suffering. That direful scene never had a parallel; yet with all the meekness of a lamb he bore it, while the dreadful vials of wrath were poured out upon him without mixture. Yes,

“He that distributes crowns and thrones,
Hangs on the tree, and bleeds and groans;
The Prince of life resigns his breath,
The King of glory bows in death.

And did he bleed, for sinners bleed?
And could the sun behold the deed?
No; he withdrew his sickening ray,
And darkness veiled the morning day.”

And while the earth was convulsed, the rocks rent, and the veil of the temple severed in twain; man, unmoved, inflexible, callous man, could remain unmoved, except by vengeance and an insatiate desire to shed his blood – to take away his life. And yet for man, the monster man, he died; died to redeem, died,

“To raise him from the depths of sin,
The gates of gaping hell,
And fix his standing more secure,
Than ‘twas before he fell.”

And although his people were guilty as the rest, he “removed their iniquity in one day.” Zech.3:13. It is for the work of that auspicious day that “we preach Christ crucified.”

But although the preaching of Christ crucified is to the saints an animating and reviving cordial, it is to the carnal Jews and other Arminians a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. And how is Christ a stumbling block to the Jews? Well, exactly as he is to all other work-mongers. The Jews claimed to be Moses’ disciples, and if they would only be circumcised, and keep the law, all would be well; and they think they can get along very well themselves. But only preach

Christ crucified to them, and by that crucifixion he completely saved his people, without any of their works, good or bad, and the Jew, [or work-monger,] being blind, and cannot see, bang they come against that stumbling block, and into the ditch they go.

“And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offense,” &c. Isa.8:14. “And to the Greeks foolishness.” The Greek, whether an ancient or modern one, is a real wiseacre; must have a fine stock of the wisdom of this world. The modern one, if he is not of the ancient order, must understand their language, by which, and by other scholastic attainments, they seek after wisdom; but instead of asking it of God, they go to their theological schools, where they learn to “teach for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matt.15:9. Talk to them about the crucifixion of Christ saving any one; foolishness! They will begin directly to cry out about their *Dianas*, or other imaginary gods. It matters not what they call them; they may call them by the name of our God; but hear them talk about theirs, and you will soon discover that he is as unlike ours as night is unlike day; so that when they give him the name of ours, it does not make him at all like ours, either in his nature or in his works. He will not save them until they do their part of the work; “but wants to save everybody,” as one told me recently, if they would only repent and believe.

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” When our God calls, “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live;” it matters not of what nationality they may be, whether Jew or Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, they must hear, and that call is the funeral knell to all their former boasted powers. The power of God and the wisdom of God give potency and efficacy to that call. He “who hath saved us, [not who will save us, if we do our part,] and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works,” [II Tim.1:9,] calls from death to life, “out of darkness into his marvelous light.” I Pet.2:9. This is an effectual calling; for “whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Rom.8:30.

“Christ the power of God.” Omnipotent, regal, reigning power. “All power in heaven and earth.” Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. He has power “to subdue all things unto himself.” Phil.3:21. Power to subdue our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:19. And blessed be his name, power on earth to forgive sin. This is authoritative power, exercised because he has suffered for the sins of his people, redeemed them from under the law, satisfied all the demands of justice; therefore he can with authority forgive them. Besides, he has power over all the enemies of his people, to shield them from all danger, and control all things for their good. The last enemy is death, but he has conquered that; but that is not all, for he has power to raise us from the dead, to change our

vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself, [Phil.3:19,] and thus cause “this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal to put on immortality.” I Cor.15:53. And after having done all this, he has power to induct us into his glorious presence, where there is fullness of joy, and at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. Psalm 16:11. Truly, he is “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

This wisdom is infinite, limitless. It was “set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” It rejoiced in the habitable part of his earth, and its delights were with the sons of men. Prov.8:23, and onward. That wisdom had not only comprehended, but fully grasped the gracious and glorious way of the salvation of sinners from their sins, made a complete revelation of that wondrous way, and so completely comprehended all things in relation to the momentous work, as to render a failure in any part of it utterly impossible; and therefore should incite the most sublime praises and hearty thanksgivings in every redeemed, grace-given subject of his kingdom. He not only has this wisdom intrinsically, but when asked for it in faith by his children, he gives it to them “liberally, and upbraideth not.” James 1:5. It is a precious boon, for it is “pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” James 3:17. How different from “the wisdom of this world,” which is “earthly, sensual, and devilish.” The dear Redeemer is even “made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” And besides all this, his wisdom, completely comprehended all the machinations and devices of our enemies, and exactly how to frustrate them.

“Though many foes beset our road,
And feeble is our arm,
Our life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm.”

This wisdom, too, has amply provided all that is needful to supply and support us in time, all that is necessary to fully beautify us in eternity. What a prospect is before us! What ecstasy awaits us beyond the end of our weary pilgrimage here!

“Fair, distant land – could mortal eyes,
But half its charms explore,
How would our spirits long to rise,
And dwell on earth no more.

No cloud those blissful regions know,

Realms ever bright and fair,
For sin, the source of mortal woe,
Can never enter there.”

Your brother in hope,

J. F. JOHNSON.

HEBREWS 9:27 - THE JUDGMENT.

Clay Village, Ky., September 1879.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - Sister Foree, of Turner’s Station, Ky., requests me to give my views on Hebrews 9:27, and as you have recently written on the same text, I should think it unnecessary, were it not her request that I should more particularly treat on “the judgment” contained therein. It reads, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.”

The apostle in the preceding chapters shows the wide contrast between the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, as well as the superiority of the latter over the former.

None of the offerings under the former covenant could put away sin, but the latter did put away sin by the sacrifice of himself – “by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Heb.10:14. The entrance of sin into the world brought death with all its woes; hence judgment passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, and hence the dreadful sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.”

Thus it was appointed unto men once to die, and after this [appointment] the judgment. As my sister requests my views particularly on this judgment, I will now proceed to give them. The passage is frequently quoted, “after death the judgment.” I may differ with some of my brethren on this point, but if wrong, I desire correction. “After this the judgment.” After what? The word *this* is a definite adjective, denoting a specific person or object. I think undoubtedly that it is after the appointment, and not after death, for the judgment immediately follows the appointment. “And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;” and

thus “the judgment was [in the past tense] by one to condemnation.” And again, “As by the offense of one, judgment came [in the past] upon all men to condemnation.” Rom.5:16,18. I recollect once hearing a Methodist preacher comment on this text, and he seemed to have no use for any part of it except the death and judgment, which he used for the purpose of alarming his hearers, or scaring religion into them. He quoted as usual, after death the judgment. He dwelt alarmingly on the great day of judgment after death; had the Judge seated upon his throne, and each individual arraigned before him, and witnesses summoned, himself to be one of the principal ones. “But,” said he, “there are some that don’t believe in such a judgment as this, but the scriptures prove it too plainly to be denied.” He then referred to John 16:8, “He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment *to come*,” emphasizing very emphatically on “to come,” when it was his own interpolation, and did not belong to the text, as he might have discovered by quoting on to the close of the 11th verse, for there it is said, “the prince of this world *is* judged” – in the past. I look for no other judgment after death but the passing of the sentence, and think that is all that the scriptures give any account of. I therefore think, as before quoted, that judgment has already passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. I have understood that Elder Leland calculated in his day, that if all who had lived since the creation, and all who then lived, were then on the earth, they would be sixteen deep over its entire face. Should that be the case, [and I think the calculation a reasonable one] it would probably require some thousands of years to arrive at a final decision according to the opinion of the Methodist preacher. When the apostle says, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” There will be no further need of litigation there. How blind, to conclude that the Lord will need witnesses to prove what men have been doing here! Then, as before observed, I think that judgment passed upon all men immediately after the appointment that men should die. “The judgment was by one man to condemnation.”

“So Christ was once offered.” As it was appointed unto man once to die, so it was appointed that Christ should be offered to die. Here is a great mystery. Christ was offered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and when his enemies crucified him they did no more than what God’s hand and counsel before determined should be done. Acts 4:28. And thus they fulfilled the scriptures in condemning him. We sometimes hear great lamentations over the entrance of sin into the world. I think it was just as impossible that it should fail to enter, as it was impossible that Christ should fail to save his people from their sins. Had it not so entered, the work of salvation would have been a nullity. I am confirmed in this opinion by an expression of Paul in Rom.6:17, where he says, “God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin.” And why thank God for that? Evidently, had we

not been the servants of sin, we could not have been the subjects of salvation. It has been a query in my mind whether the condition of man, so far as this world is concerned, was really worsted by the entrance of sin into the world. Let us sit down in Adam's condition before the fall, without the necessity of labor, speculation, or the need of gain of any kind – everything plentifully provided for our sustenance, without the intervention of thorns, thistles, or other noxious growths, to give us necessary exercise, how miserable would we be! Let us try it now, even if everything needful were afforded us, how would we enjoy ourselves? I verily believe that when the earth was cursed for man's sake, it was for the sake of his enjoyment. Had we not been thus condemned there would have been no necessity for the justifying righteousness of the Savior. Had it been the will of God to prevent the entrance of sin into the world, he could, no doubt, have done so; but he did not prevent it, and therefore judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Thus the entrance of sin into the world, and death by sin, opened the channel for the great and mysterious work of the salvation of sinners from their sins, as well as for the display of the justice of God in the condemnation of ungodly sinners for their sins.

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” As it was appointed of God that man should die, as before observed, so also it was appointed that Christ should be offered and die for the sins of his people.

“When Adam to eat of the fruit was inclined,
It answered the purpose Jehovah designed;
No purpose of wisdom was altered thereby;
He fell for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

He therefore, by the appointment of God, of necessity, must “himself bear our sins in his own body on the tree.” What a wonderful exhibition of the love, mercy, grace and goodness of God! And with astonishment we ask, Why such love to such objects?

Imagine the well-beloved Son of God in the bosom of his Father, and all brilliant with glory before the world was, beyond the reach of enemies, of sorrow, grief or suffering of any kind; yet when sin entered into the world, with all its tragical calamities, when he saw his brethren, the gift of his Father, going down into a terrible whirlpool, sinking into a miserable chasm, a horrible pit; behold, the dear Redeemer leaves that Elysium adobe, bending his course downward to this world of wickedness, to suffer the affliction consequent upon our sins. How amazing too, that “it pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put him to grief.” Here was;

“Love divine, all love excelling,

Joy from heaven to earth came down.”

How we should rejoice in the immutability of God’s love; for, could sin, death and hell combined have changed that love, could he ever have offered his dear Son “to bear the sins of many,” even the sins of all his people?

“And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.” Those who look for him, of course, are those who have seen him, or tasted that he is gracious, and none who get that taste ever lose the relish for it, but can sing with the poet;

“What peaceful hours I then enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still.”

To look for him in the true sense of the text, I think, implies an anxious desire for him, and where is the child of grace that has not that desire? When passing the deep waters of tribulation we look for him, for we know that in him only we can have peace. In the cold, dark and dreary night we look for him, for he alone can give us light. When hungering and thirsting after righteousness, we look for him, knowing that he can fill us with the bread and water of life; aye, he is “made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption;” he is all in all to us. Yes, we shall look for him even when the cold arms of death are about to enfold us. Then with what anxiety shall we be “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” And when he appears the second time, O how vastly different from his first appearing! Not as the seemingly feeble babe of Bethlehem, consigned to a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn; not as when borne away to Egypt by his parents, to escape the wily vengeance of the Roman Procurator; not to fast forty days and nights in the wilderness; not to wear that “visage marred more than any man, and his form more that the sons of men;” not to receive the calumny, the reproach, the indignity that was unsparingly heaped upon him while once inhabiting this wicked world; not groaning and sweating drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane; not buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross, to groan, bleed and die under the ponderous weight of the sins of his people; no, but without sin unto salvation.

No tongue can tell, nor pen delineate the majesty, splendor and unsullied glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ when he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.

My dear sister Foree, brothers, sisters, all, let us extol, reverence, adore and praise his holy name, and rejoice that he now reigns, and must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

“That head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns,
The heavenly victor now.”

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death,” and after that destruction, with what rapture, with what excessive ecstasy shall we hail the second appearing of the majestic Savior, enrobed in all the transparency of his brilliant glory, and O, amazing and transporting thought, when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,

“When shall I reach that happy place,
And be forever blest?
When shall I see my Father’s face,
And in his bosom rest.”

In love permit me to remain your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

BETHLEHEM EPHRATAH.

Clay Village, Ky., 1880.

BRETHREN BEEBE AND SON: - I propose writing a little on the name, or names rather, of that celebrated city called *Bethlehem Ephratah*, as found in Micah 5:2 – “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

Although I have written the whole verse, I intend to confine myself to the names, their significance, and some important reminiscences that cluster round that city, made so famous for being the birthplace of the King, the Savior, the Redeemer of Israel. Its situation is about six miles south of Jerusalem, and it is

called also “the city of David.” The name *Bethlehem* signifies “house of bread.” That of *Ephratah* signifies “abundance; bearing fruit.” I cannot say why it was called by both of these names, unless it was more fully to exhibit its significance. It was the birthplace or residence of David, and at least five of his ancestors, all of whose names were conspicuously significant or typical, as most of those ancient names were. They were as follows: *Elimelech* signifying, “My God is King;” *Mahlon* signifying, “Song; infirmity;” *Boaz* signifying, “Strength;” *Obed* signifying, “Servant; workman;” *Jesse* signifying, “Gift; oblation;” *David* signifying, “Well beloved; dear.”

In treating on the significance of these names, we will first observe that Christ and his kingdom were the all-important and absorbing themes of the patriarchs and prophets. Abraham rejoiced to see his day; and he saw it, and was glad. John 8:56. And again, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” [Rev.19:10] in many instances, no doubt; but many of the names given to persons, places and things, were from a prophetic view of future events. In other cases, God evidently caused circumstances to transpire that would suggest and cause certain names to be given. When Abraham and Sarah were told that Sarah should have a son, they laughed, [Gen.17:17; 18:12;] and when that son was born they called him Isaac, which signifies laughter, or joy. When Isaac’s twin sons, Esau and Jacob, were born, the latter had the former by the heel, and they called him *Jacob*, signifying supplanter, or heeler. He afterwards supplanted his brother.

The first one of those conspicuous characters of Bethlehem Ephratah whose name we shall consider is *Elimelech*, “My God is King.” Whatever may have occurred to fix the name on this significant character, it evidently had a particular significant bearing; and I think it doubtless has reference to that majestic, regal Ruler named in the text, that is to be ruler in Israel, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” The mere calling the name of the individual was calculated to direct the mind of the Israelites to that supreme Ruler whose kingly power had been so miraculously displayed in the land of Egypt, in delivering them from bondage, in the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, in raining bread from heaven when in the barren wilderness, in the terrible display of his majesty when giving them the law on Sinai, in driving out seven nations from the promised inheritance, in bringing them into a land flowing with milk and honey. No wonder, when reviewing these, and many other equally marvelous transactions performed by the King of Israel in behalf of his peculiar people, that one of them should say, in the naming of his son, “My God is King.” I suppose that this name would also prophetically and typically point to the Ruler of the universe as King of kings and Lord of lords, as well as to the King of Zion.

The next name claiming our attention is *Mahlon*, and it signifies “Song; infirmity.” Songs are indicative of merriment, joy, thanksgiving, and of triumph or

victory. I know of no song spoken of in the Bible that would be more likely to suggest this name to an Israelite than that of Moses and Miriam, repeated, the first in Exodus 15:1, and the second in the 20th of the same chapter, where Moses and the children of Israel sing, “I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.” Miriam and her minstrels “answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.” The same name too might indicate the future songs of Zion, as spoken of in the Psalms of David, 28:7, 40:3, 69:30, and many others; and also in Isaiah 26:1, “In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks;” and also in Revelation 5:9, 14:3 & 15:3. But notwithstanding the singing of all these songs of joy, thanksgiving and triumph, “infirmity,” the other meaning of the name, was interwoven in the character of all the songsters.

Then we have *Boaz*, signifying “strength.” This name seems to exemplify the almighty power of that strong arm or hand that wrought such wonders, not only in the deliverance of the peculiar people from bondage, but also in the acts performed by him in their defense and repeated deliverances from their numerous and potent enemies, proving himself to be emphatically “the strength of the children of Israel,” as the prophet has said, “Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” Isa.26:4. There also seems to be here a typical portrait of that strong Deliverer that “shall come out of Zion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” Romans 11:26.

Next comes *Obed*, meaning “Servant; workman.” May not this name refer not only to Moses, who was so frequently called and looked up to by the people of Israel as the servant of God, but also to him as the prototype of him who is spoken of in Isaiah 42:1, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth?” Or to him who “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant?” Phil.2:7. The other signification of the name may have reference to the number of workmen engaged, first in building the tabernacle in the wilderness, then the temple at Jerusalem, which were types of the church; and secondly, of her workmen that “needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;” or those “who labor in word and doctrine.”

Then we have *Jesse*, “Gift; oblation.” This is the immediate father of David, and I think that in this significant name is a pointer or typical directory to that unspeakably precious “gift of God,” or bestowment of his dear Son to his people, that infinitely transcends in super-excellence all other gifts, the intrinsic worth of which will remain forever incalculable. And what an oblation! An atoning sacrifice – one offering, that “perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Heb.10:14. It may have had direct reference to the mere gift of a son to Obed; but I think it undoubtedly had reference as a type to that inestimable gift of God, and that all

sufficient oblation that completed the supernatural work of eternal redemption at the tragical scene exhibited on Calvary.

Next we speak of that conspicuous character, *David*, “Well beloved; dear.” We cannot suppose for a moment that this appellation was accidentally imposed on this individual. David was a brilliant type of Christ, who speaks of him all through the Psalms as of himself, and of whom Christ is said to be “the Son,” repeatedly, and “the seed of David according to the flesh.” Rom.1:3. He was the anointed [authorized, empowered] king of Israel, and was said to be a man after God’s own heart. I Sam.13:14; Acts 13:22. As the name of *David* signifies “well beloved,” so Christ was the beloved Son of God, declared to be the beloved Son of his Father, both at his baptism and his transfiguration on the mount. David was “dear” to the people of Israel, and dear to the Lord. He was therefore “well beloved and dear,” as was his Anti-type, to his Father and his people.

Last and greatest of all was born in Bethlehem Ephratah, Christ Jesus – the anointed, empowered Savior. Well might it be called the “House of bread.” “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” John 6:34, 50. It is life-giving bread; yes, eternal life. Then think of its boundlessness, its inexhaustible plenitude! It has afforded a rich and delicious repast for the saints to feast upon in all past ages, and will in all ages to come; and when time shall be no more, eternity will not exhaust or even diminish its fullness. But in order to appreciate this bread we must have both the appetite to relish, and the faculty by which we can feed upon it. The Lord alone can give us the appetite; then we feed upon it, hunger for it. But our carnal nature has no faculty with which we can eat the bread of life. Now let us consider the faculty, personal quality or ability to eat the bread of life which came down from heaven, and was developed in Bethlehem, the “House of bread.” It is by faith only that we can eat the flesh of the Son of man, and except we eat it, we have no life in us. But what is faith? “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Heb.11:1. We wish to notice this faculty or qualification, by which this bread is eaten, a little in detail, for it is a matter of vital importance, as we have no life [eternal life] except we eat it.

We have a number of preachers in this country who tell the people the evidence or belief is all that is necessary in order to be saved. “Only believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,” they say, is all that is required. Well, the devils believe that, and what would they do if one of those devils should present himself as a candidate for admission into one of their so-called churches, and tell them that he believed that Jesus is the Son of God? They must accept him, or reject their rule, for it is the only test they have for membership. But let us examine this faculty a little further, for its importance requires that the people of God should distinguish between this living faith and one that is dead. See James 2:17,26. It is only by faith

that we eat this bread, and we have shown that this living faith is both a substance and an evidence. We will suppose a case. Suppose then, that A is traveling on a wearisome journey, and is very hungry. He meets his friend B, and says, "Friend B, I am hungry." "Come to my house," says B, "I have plenty." Now he has an evidence, but this does not satisfy him. Perhaps he wants a stronger evidence. He goes to the house, and presently sees the table spread, and furnished with all he can desire. That is as strong evidence as he can wish. But does that satisfy his appetite? No. What will? Let him eat, for he would starve to death on the best evidence, without the substance. And when one has "tasted that the Lord is gracious," the language will be, Lord, evermore give me this bread.

Let us next consider *Ephratah*, "Abundance; bearing fruit." How shall we attempt to compute the abundance of this bread? And not only bread, but everything that the most capacious conception of saints can imagine, and still more. Imagination's utmost stretch in wonder dies away. It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell in him. Col.1:19. Here is unbounded, illimitable, eternal love in all its abundance. A preacher once said that when he attempted to feed the saints out of this ocean of love, he felt like a child at the edge of the edge of the ocean, dipping it out with a teaspoon; but I ask, where is the edge? Boundless, fathomless. Here is abundance of joy, too. In his presence is fullness of joy; at his right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Psa.16:11. "Joy unspeakable and full of glory." I Pet.1:8. Here is abundance of grace, too. "For if by one man's disobedience death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom.5:17. "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14. But why attempt to itemize? In this blessed One there is everything that can feed, feast, happify or glorify the saints in all places, all time, all eternity.

Ephratah also signifies "bearing fruit." This I suppose has reference to the fruit of the Vine and its branches, for the branches and fruit come out of the Vine; and what delicious, heart-soothing fruit it is. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, &c. Indeed this fruit permeates all that is good; "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." Eph.5:9. Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." John 15:16. "The tree is known by its fruit." How commendable to see the branches manifest their vitality in the Vine by their fruit. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psa.126:6.

The names of the persons and place treated on in the foregoing remarks indubitably have a momentous significance; but whether the deductions drawn

from them are in accordance with the scriptures, others must judge. But the climax of the celebrity of this city was the birth there of Christ Jesus, [anointed or empowered Savior,] a little more than one thousand, eight hundred and seventy-nine years ago. That all-important circumstance should recall to the mind of the people of God a reminiscence worthy of their most profound and solemn meditation. But to undertake now to dwell upon the superlative work, the sublime character, and the majestic mien of that august One, opens a field too expansive for me to enter with my feeble capacities. I therefore submit the preceding remarks to you, brethren editors, to dispose of as you think best.

Brother Beebe, as I have heretofore silently listened to the misrepresentations and calumnies that have been published and circulated through the country against you, brother Dudley, myself and others, perhaps it will not be amiss for me to make a few remarks here on that subject, as my silence might be construed into consent. If I know my own heart, I desire to “recompense to no man evil for evil.” Our false accusers may be brethren misinformed, or they may be open enemies. But in either case, “we should be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons.” Col.3:25. Our dear Savior has said, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely* for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.” That should be a sufficient solace, without doing or wishing them evil. I have heard of an individual who was pathetically complaining of bad reports circulated through the neighborhood about him. “O,” said his neighbors, “never mind; there are always some who will raise and circulate false reports about us.” “Ah,” said he, “if they were false, I would not mind them; but every word is true.” Those are the reports that hurt. If we can only conduct ourselves in such a way that our enemies shall have nothing bad to say about us that is true, we shall be fortunate indeed. The Lord knows our hearts, and also the hearts of our accusers. If we are really what we profess to be, the Lord works *all things* for our good, even all the wrongs we may suffer. Then we should bless them that persecute us; bless, and curse not. We dare not shun to declare all the counsel of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, whether they curse or whether they bless us; and then let us calmly and patiently take the consequences. And may the Lord grant us dispositions to pray for and forgive our enemies for his dear name’s sake.

In much humility, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

ALL THINGS – ROMANS 8:28.

Clay Village, Ky., February 1880.

MY DEAR BRETHREN BEEBE: - In the third number, present volume of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, I find the following request: "I desire the views of our dear brother J.F. Johnson on Romans 8:28. Whether the *all things* mean natural things or not?"

The whole text reads thus: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

The apostle was not guessing at things here, and I cannot imagine how a more comforting and encouraging expression could be formed out of words. He knew what he affirmed, and he knew its importance to "them that love God," and therefore would leave them without the shadow of a doubt. I wish to make some remarks on the text found in Eph.1:11, as I consider the two passages intimately connected. There it is said, "In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Here we are informed that God works all things, and in the text under consideration, that he works them all for good to them that love him, and are the called according to his purpose. But my brother desires to know "whether the *all things* mean natural things or not." I answer unhesitatingly, that spiritual things and natural things, great things and small things, good things and bad things, things in heaven, things on earth and things under the earth, ALL, all things work together for good to them that love God, as I shall now try to evince. I suppose it will be conceded by all who are "spiritually minded" that all spiritual things are managed or worked for the good of God's people, and for them exclusively. They were given us in Christ Jesus for our good before the world began. No doubt my brother has realized this in everything that he has enjoyed. It is equally evident that natural things also are for our good. Our food, drink and raiment are all for our good. The natural earth that we tread upon which produces our food, raiment, &c., the rain and the snow that falleth upon the earth and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, are evidently for our good. Our trials, afflictions, disappointments and temptations, that seem for the time being to be against us, are often proved by after experience to be for our good. When the sons of Jacob brought to him the news from Egypt where they went to buy corn, he said, "All these things are against me," when in reality they were opening the way for the joyful meeting of his supposed long lost son Joseph. David said, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I have kept

thy word.” And again, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.” Psa.119:67,71.

I am here reminded of a circumstance that took place with brother Beebe and myself a number of years ago. We had been away attending some meetings, and started for home, eager to meet a certain train of cars to return on, but they had just left when we reached the station. We were disappointed, but it was likely for our good, for we afterward learned that that train was terribly smashed and a number killed and many seriously injured.

Again, the apostle says, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” Why? “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” James 1:2,12. I have said that great things and small things work for our good. “The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” Psa.126:3. These great things include spiritual and natural ones innumerable. All spiritual things that he has wrought in and for his people are great things, and all for their good. He rebukes strong nations for the good of his people; makes kings their nursing fathers and queens their nursing mothers; subdues kingdoms for them. And in connection with the great, we may include the great work of redemption, all that pertains to the salvation of his people; and to accomplish these great things he uses the small things. To accomplish the great deliverance of his national people from their bondage in Egypt, he used the frogs, the lice, the flies, the locusts, &c.

Imagine the frogs bubbling up out of the rivers, and there they go, hop, hop, hop, the Lord directing every hop to the very house, bed-chamber, bed, oven and kneading-trough where he decreed it should go. Then Aaron stretches his rod over the dust of the earth, and instead of dust the earth is alive with lice; and here they go, every step of every louse to every Egyptian where the Lord sent it; not a stray louse on Pharaoh or any of his hosts. And the flies. Go along the border of Goshen, where the Hebrews dwell; look on that side where the Egyptians dwell, and see the air swarming with flies, and on the Hebrews side not a fly, for God had said no flies should be there; and when they strike the dividing line, they stop or turn as though they had encountered a stone wall. Then the locusts; and other miracles are worked there by the Lord, but none of the plagues troubled the Lord’s people; he was working all for their good. Finally Pharaoh is humbled and subdued, and the Lord’s people liberated. But I must not note here all the minute things that occurred to the Jews on their long journey to the promised land. One more circumstance, however, I will refer to. When they were about to enter that land the Lord told them, saying, “I will send hornets before thee, [they are little things, too] which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite and the Hittite before thee.” And he did it, for he says in Joshua, “And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out,” &c. This kind of warfare looks a little ludicrous. What must those “ites” have

thought on seeing the country swarming with hornets? And presently they feel them, pop, pop, pop. I can't tell how they knew where to get rid of them; but they must leave the country, for the Lord said they should drive them out.

All things work together for good to God's people, it matters not how small, if it is large enough to call a *thing*. See myriads of motes and tiny insects dancing in the sunbeams. Think you they are frisking about there at random? God "worketh all things." I do not know what he wants with those little things, nor do I know what he wants with a mammoth; but he made them all, and, of course, has use for them all. If it is best for one of his people to take him out of this world of trouble, [it is always best for them when they are taken] he can do it by sending a mote into the eye, produce inflammation there, extend it to the brain, and do it as effectually as with a thunderbolt. Or if it is his will to take an enemy away from them, he can do it in the same way. There may be smaller things yet, but he works them all. I have no idea that the fiercest hurricane that ever blew has ever carried a particle of dust farther, or suffered it to fall short of where God predestinated it to stop. One has said, and I think truthfully, "If providence should be taken by surprise, by the casual impinging of an accident, one fortuitous grain might dislocate the banded universe. The smallest seeming trifle is ordered as the morning light, and he that rideth on the hurricane is pilot to the bubble on the breaker."

I have said that good things and bad things work together for good to God's people. That good things work together for their good, I suppose is evident to my brother, and is no doubt often experienced by him; but that bad things do, may not appear so obvious to him; but there are plenty of circumstances recorded in the scriptures evincing the fact. When the brethren of Joseph sold and sent him to Egypt as a slave, all will admit that it was bad in them to do so; for Joseph told them afterward that they thought evil against him, but God meant it for good. Gen.1:20. And after he was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, that libidinous wife of his acted very badly in telling a falsehood on him and having him imprisoned in a dungeon for his virtue; but that was only another step toward his greatness. Then the king's officers must be imprisoned, and must dream dreams, and Joseph interprets them. Then Pharaoh must dream. He interprets the king's dreams, and then is made governor over all Egypt. Then see the result to his father's family, as well as to his self.

But there are other bad things, worse, if possible, than the ones named, that have worked for good to God's people; and I know not but that all the bad things that have ever been done have been worked for the glory of God and the good of his people; for the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. Psa.76:10. Reference to one other circumstance will perhaps be sufficient on this point, and that is the crucifixion of the Savior. Could there be more heinous, diabolical wickedness than the murdering of the innocent Lamb of

God on the Calvary cross? And yet God so overruled the whole matter that it turned out to be *magna charta* of the salvation of sinners. The cross secures their crown and confirms their hope as an anchor both sure and steadfast forever.

“Great was the mystery! Truly great!
That hell’s designs should hell defeat;
But here eternal wisdom shined,
For Satan wrought what God designed.”

The fiends fulfilled the scriptures in condemning him; and though they did it unwittingly, it was what God’s hand and counsel before determined should be done. Acts 4:28; 13:27.

Then I have said that things in heaven, things on the earth, and things under the earth, all work for the good of God’s people. O the mysterious, heart-cheering work that has ever been going on, and will ever go on, in heaven for the people of God. Love has been beaming toward them forever. “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Jer.31:3. There the glorious Mediatorial Head of his people was set up from everlasting or ever the earth was. Prov.7:23. “Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2. There matchless grace that consummates the glorious work of salvation was given us in him before the world began, and,

“Grace all the work shall crown,
In everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”

There, too, absolute predestination decreed the adoption of the Adamic man into the family of God, putting him among the children, securing to him a glorious resurrection life, and there their names were indelibly written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. Rev.17:8. I firmly believe that even the devil’s wiles in the fall of man is worked by the unerring wisdom and power of God for the good of his people. If not, why did Paul say, “God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin?” Rom.6:17.

“Here Satan was nonplus’d in what he had done;
The fall wrought the channel were mercy should run,
In streams of salvation that never run dry,
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

And from the bud of time until now, the Lord has so ruled and overruled the works of men and devils as to make them conducive to the good of his people and the glory of his hallowed name; for the wrath of man shall praise him; the remainder of wrath he shall restrain. *Psa.76:10.*

Yes, all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. This call is the voice of God, and must be heard and obeyed. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” *John 5:25.* And the call must reach “even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” *Acts 2:39.* It is a holy calling, and therefore a call to holiness. “Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” *II Tim.1:9.* The “purpose” is steadfast as the throne of God, and is an eternal purpose. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Eph.3:11.* No frustrating this purpose. “The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” *Isa.14:24.* This purpose embraces every one of God’s people, this grace saves every one, and this call penetrates the ear of every one, and “they shall hear,” and “shall be saved.” “And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” *Acts 2:21; Rom.10:13.* It is the work of God, and therefore done forever. “I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.” *Eccl.3:14.* Things under the earth must work for good to the Lord’s people. This expression, I conclude, will hold good if we descend to the regions of devils; for,

“If devils move, ‘tis by consent,
Of him who is omnipotent.”

I think it has been evinced that in the enemy’s first work on earth he out-done himself, and opened for the saints a never to be exhausted channel of mercy. If it were not so, then,

“How could sin forgiving grace,
‘Mong all the creatures find a place?
While all were good, no harm could be,
For mercy’s aid to misery.”

Then it must be admitted that the work of him and his cohorts, over-ruled and directed as it was by omnipotency and infinite wisdom, secured a “good hope

through grace” for all that love God; and how is it possible that we could indulge that hope today, if Satan and his imps had not crucified the Lord of glory?

Brother McAdams, I have tried to comply with your request. Please examine what I have written closely, and compare it with the scriptures. If it accords therewith, and is of any benefit or comfort to you, I am amply paid. It seems to me a source of great pleasure to all that love God, that he does thus dispose of *all* things. May we all, then, be enabled to meet our miseries with a becoming fortitude and submission to the divine and righteous will of him who worketh all things together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

“If thus the Lord doth work all things,
Together for our good,
How should we praise the King of kings,
And triumph in his blood.”

Your brother in hope of eternal life,

J. F. JOHNSON.

MOSES-AARON/CALEB-JOSHUA.

Clay Village, Ky., March 18, 1880.

MY DEAR BRETHREN BEEBE: - I have concluded to suggest a few remarks on the distinguished characters, Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, for publication in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and submit them to your disposal. From some cause, and I know not what the cause is, my mind has been made to contemplate upon those notable characters, and their various significant performances.

Moses was certainly a very conspicuous character in biblical history, and filled an important station in the Jewish nation. His name signifies, “Drawn out of the water.” Whether the name was designed to have any further significance than the simple fact that he was drawn out of the water, I cannot to a certainty say; but as he was a mediator, and the representative of the Jewish people, and as water is frequently used in the scriptures to signify trouble, tribulation, may it not have reference to his deliverance of that people from their sore bondage in Egypt, and,

as their deliverance from bondage was doubtless typical of the deliverance of the people of God from a more terrible and degraded state of bondage by the spiritual Mediator, point to that circumstance also? Be that as it may, he was drawn out of the water, adopted as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians was mighty in words and in deeds, and made heir apparent to the throne of Egypt. But notwithstanding the glowing prospect of all the earthly pomp and worldly glory that lay before him, he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Heb.11:24-26. Noble emulation; but "he had respect to the recompense of the reward." In this and in many other respects he was no doubt a glowing type of Christ. He says, in Deut.18:15, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." Thus did the Lord in this early period of time prefigure a more glorious work of a more glorious Mediator, that has delivered his people from a more terrible state of bondage by putting away their sin by the sacrifice of himself. The deliverance of the Hebrews from the yoke of bondage, the destruction of their enemies in the Red Sea, forty years in the wilderness, the crossing of the Jordan, and all the emblematic work in the promised land, were all directories to the pious Jews, pointing as a great cloud of testimonials to the great Anti-type, who was to "appear in the end of the [Jewish] world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

But one person was not enough to portray the coming and work of the great majestic Mediator, and therefore Aaron, with his flippant tongue, must accompany Moses as a teacher and priest, for Moses complained, saying, "I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." This whole mission was fraught and filled up with many important typical events. Before his outset, Moses was shown the very singular circumstance of a flaming fire burning in the midst of a bush, and yet the bush was not consumed. Signifying, first, the severe suffering of his brethren in Egypt, and typically, the fiery ordeal through which the church of Christ should pass; and yet in all these fiery trials the Lord sustains, and makes a way for her escape, and therefore, like the bush, she should not be consumed. When the time arrived for the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, the Passover was secured by slaying and eating the paschal lamb, [lively type of the Lamb of God,] but it must be eaten with bitter herbs; after which the Lord miraculously delivers his people at the Red Sea, and the obedient waters were made to close upon and destroy the Egyptian hosts. They sang songs of triumph and passed on, but soon came to the waters of Marah [more bitterness,] but the Lord showed Moses a certain tree, which when thrown into the waters they became sweet. I suppose this tree was

typical of the tree of life spoken of in Revelation 22:2. The Lord also rained bread from heaven, and sent quails in abundance to supply them with food while traversing the barren wilderness; and as for their clothing, their garments waxed not old, neither did their feet swell. It is very encouraging to look back and see the temporal deliverances, support, protection and forbearance exercised toward his national people, typifying in advance the goodness and plenitude vouchsafed to his spiritual people of the gospel dispensation.

Nor was Aaron the priest idle while these memorable events were going on. His burning incense and various oblations were offered at the waters of Marah, and throughout their journey in the wilderness, until they reached the borders of the promised land; but on Mount Sinai the might and majesty of the Lord were most conspicuously displayed. And what a majestic display! The bellowing peals of thunder, the flashing flood of lightning, the shrill, piercing sound of the trumpet! The pompous scene caused the people to tremble; “And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.” Here the law was given, with all its sin avenging wrath, taking cognizance of every evil thought and deed; and like Moses, its eye never grew dim, nor its natural force abated. Moses performs one more notable work near here, at Mount Horeb, which was very significant. The people clamored for water, and Moses and Aaron gathered the people around a rock. How unlikely the prospect of obtaining water from the flinty rock. But Moses smites it twice, and the water gushes out, affording drink for the people plentifully. Beautiful emblem of the law-smitten Savior, and the subsequent flow of the “water of life.” “For the transgression of my people was he stricken.” Isa.53:8. And again, “Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” Zech.13:8.

But Aaron must be removed “by reason of death.” After fulfilling his official work of burning incense, his offerings and sacrifices, he has filled his mission as a type of the great High Priest and Apostle of our profession, and must die on Mount Hor, for he sinned at Meribah. He was therefore taken to the top of the mountain, divested of his pontifical robes, which were placed upon Eleazar his son, and dies there.

These two notable characters combined present very brilliant and significant types of the Savior. While Moses was lawgiver to a national community, Christ gave “the law of the spirit of life” to his spiritual family. While Aaron made offerings and sacrifices for the remembrance of the sins of a national people, Christ made one offering, one sacrifice, that “perfected forever them that are sanctified” as his peculiar people. But Moses has yet a great work to perform. Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, were to be subdued, and their country given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. These two tribes and a half were to have half their possession on this side of Jordan, but it will be recollected that their men of war were to be armed and go over Jordan [leaving their wives and

little ones behind,] to help in subduing the Canaanites. I have been asked why these two tribes and a half had their portion assigned to them this side of Jordan, and what did that circumstance signify? In answer to that question I will remark that, I think the land of Canaan, instead of being, as some suppose, a type of heaven, was typical of the gospel church or dispensation, and crossing the Jordan signified the passing out of the old dispensation into the new. If that be the case, then I suppose those two tribes and the half tribe represented God's peculiar people among the Jews, that never reached or dwelt in the gospel dispensation. But as the men of war must go over and assist in subduing the enemies in the land of Canaan, so we need the prophets or former saints to assist us in putting to flight our enemies in this gospel day; and they are of signal benefit to us. How easy for us to prove not only the truth of the New Testament by the Old, but other things often transpire that require the prophetic writers to sustain us, so that they compass us about with a great cloud of witnesses. As to Moses, after subduing the kings Sihon and Og, and the appointment of their possessions to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, his work seems to be drawing to a close, and he says to the Lord, "I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan." Deut.3:5. But the Lord refused to let him cross over Jordan, and commanded him to get up into the top of Pisgah, and see the land with his eyes, and said, "Thou shalt not go over this Jordan." He was to charge Joshua to go over, and strengthen him, and was to die on the top of Pisgah; and there he did die, and the Lord buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, "and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day," though work-mongers have been trying to find and dig him up ever since. Moses [the law or works] can bring no one into the kingdom of heaven.

Caleb and Joshua: The name Caleb signifies, "a dog, a cow, or a basket." I cannot tell why this name was given to him, or what it was to signify. He and Joshua were the only two adults that were redeemed and came from the land of bondage that were to cross over Jordan and possess the promised land. See Numbers 14:29,30. The name *Joshua* signifies "Savior," and it is sufficiently evident that he typified the Savior of sinners. He and Caleb were sent over in the first place to spy out the land, and brought a good report; while others reported adversely to them, and gave account of great danger, on account of which they were prohibited from passing over Jordan, while Caleb and Joshua were ordered to pass over and possess the land. As they were the only two that were suffered to cross over into the promised land, and as John the Baptist and Christ were the only two that passed out of the old into the new dispensation, I think that Caleb and Joshua were lively types of John the Baptist and Christ, for they were the only two that passed out of the old into the new dispensation. For "the law and the prophets were until John" – extended no further, but stopped there; therefore none could come out of the old, for it did not exist. John the Baptist, like Caleb, not only saw,

but entered into the new dispensation, gathered its fruits, and exhibited them to others.

How wonderful the prescience and work of God! He not only foresaw and ordained the signal blessings of the glorious gospel of the Son of God, but so clearly developed them to the ancient patriarchs and prophets as to leave them and us without the shadow of a doubt as to their fulfillment. What indubitable evidence of his wisdom, power, veracity, faithfulness and goodness in all that he has ordained and in all his works for the good of his people, in the distribution of both his temporal and spiritual blessings to them. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, with the patriarchs and other prophets and priests, were prominent precursors of the coming Messiah and the fulfillment of his predictions, as well as the beneficence of his nature, in thus providing for and supplying with all the plenitude of his bounty everything that we need either for time or eternity. In the execution of his designs and the fulfillment of his promises, what incontestable testimonials we have, what a firm basis to rest upon. No casual impingings, no conditional circumstances upon which a doubt can reasonably rest. In all these cases Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua point unerringly to the Savior of us poor sinners; and how should we rejoice to see those typical characters so completely filling their stations, and the work of those hieroglyphical ones so completely fulfilled in our day. It is really heart-cheering to see that the Lord in those early ages should thus raise up such faithful emblematical personages, and so direct their performances as to tell in all succeeding ages and in unmistakable language – show forth by undeniable performances the great and glorious advent and work of the Savior of sinners in so lucid a light as to dispel every fear of a failure as to the complete consummation of his eternal designs.

As ever, your brother,

J. F. JOHNSON.

TITUS 3:5 – THE WASHING OF REGENERATION.

Clay Village, Ky., July 1, 1880.

DEAR BRETHREN BEEBE: - In looking over No.12, present volume of the SIGNS, I see a request from brother T.D. Clarkson, of California, which reads as follows:

“Will Elder J.F. Johnson please give his views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on Titus 3:5, especially what was saved by the washing of regeneration, and what was renewed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost? Please bring this matter within a strong and clear light.”

I cannot assure my brother that I will bring the matter within a “strong and clear light,” for that depends altogether whether the Lord will afford me such a light; but I will do the best I can in compliance with his request.

The text reads, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” “Not by works of righteousness.” This short sentence settles at once a damper and a deadly veto on the whole theory of the worldly or work-mongrel religion of the day. Not a society in the country, outside of the Old School Baptists, but must have salvation by works, or by endeavoring to mix works and grace together to accomplish that salvation. But it is “not by works,” “not of works,” “not according to works” “of righteousness which we have done,” and surely none will contend that it is by works of unrighteousness which we have done; therefore it is not by works of any kind that we have done or can do.

Let us next consider the significance of this word *mercy*. I think the word has not precisely a synonym in our language. Grace, perhaps, comes nearest to it. Mercy signifies, first, relief to sufferers, pity, compassion, pardon, &c., but to objects entirely unworthy of these blessings. It is peculiarly adapted to the condition of the Lord’s people when suffering under a sense of their sinfulness and deserved punishment for their sins; and the relief appears truly great when Christ makes known to them the riches of his mercy in their salvation; and though they feel very unworthy, the joy is unspeakable and full of glory. It is according to such mercy he *saved* us. Mark you, it is in the past tense that the apostle speaks of this wonderful and all-glorious work having been done; not what is doing now, nor will be done hereafter. Isaiah said [45:17,] “Israel shall be saved in the Lord;” and the angel said [Matt.1:21,] “He shall save his people from their sins.” But when the immaculate Lamb of God “was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification,” the momentous work was finished; hence Paul says, “*saved* us by the washing of regeneration,” “who *hath saved* us, and called us,” &c.

“By the washing of regeneration.” To wash is to cleanse by ablution from stain, pollution, filth, &c.; to remove putrescence or corruption of all kinds. Salvation from all this was fully consummated when “Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.” That great and marvelous work constituted “the regeneration” of all that ever were or ever will be regenerated. This idea may be scoffed, ridiculed and contradicted, but it is irrefutable. The Lord’s people have been receiving manifestations of this regeneration all along since it was completed, but the

manifestation of a thing is not the thing itself. It is incontrovertible, therefore, that it was the polluted *sinner* that was saved by the washing of regeneration. Brother C. wants this matter put in a “strong and clear light.” Well, “He [Christ] died for our sins.” “His blood cleanseth us from all sin.” “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to God and his Father; unto him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” I know not how to put the matter in a stronger or clearer light than these holy men of God have done. It was the defiled sinner that was saved by the washing of regeneration, for none other needed ablution.

Brother C. desires me to say also what was renewed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. To renew is not to give life, but to sustain, perpetuate and uphold life where that life exists. That life ever existed in the new man; but as he is constantly exposed to a cruel warfare, he as constantly needs this renewal. The outward man decayeth, but the inward man is renewed day by day. The scriptures do not tell me anything about the renewing of the outward man. The din of war is continually raging between the flesh and the spirit, or between the old and new man, and while the battle is raging so vehemently, it is a consoling reflection that the victory of the new man is inevitable; for while one is daily decaying, the other is daily renewed, and there is no doubt as to which will triumph.

Let us heed the admonition of the apostle [Eph.4:22,] and put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, “and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” When that signal and glorious victory which was won on Calvary shall have been consummated in all the saints, and realized by all, with what emotions of joy will we hail the happy event, with what ecstatic joy, what songs of deliverance, what heart-thrilling melody will we chant the high praises of the great Deliverer, “and crown him Lord of all.”

I will close this brief and incoherent communication, submit it to the will of the editors of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and if published, to the scriptural scrutiny of brother Clarkson and others, and remain, as ever,

J. F. JOHNSON.

THE DEATH OF ADAM.

Clay Village, Ky., 1880.

“Will Elder J.F. Johnson of Ky., give his views on I Cor.15:22? Did Adam die a spiritual death or not? If he did not, how are we spiritually dead? The question has been asked us, and we are bothered over it. By answering this you will confer a favor on the least of the little ones, if one at all.

G.W. Russell.

BRETHREN BEEBE: - The above is a request from brother Russell, of Missouri. We do not suppose that the death here spoken of is a spiritual death, nor do we suppose that a spiritual death literally can possibly occur. Said Christ, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” And again, “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Let it be noted here that *die* in the text is used in the present tense; it is not *died*, in the past, or we would all have been dead according to the wording of the text before now. Neither is it a spiritual death that we die, for we read of no such death in the scriptures. It is simply the corporeal death of *Adam* that is spoken of in the text; and when I say Adam, I mean all his posterity with him; for all the nations that dwell on all the face of the earth are simply Adam multiplied. No addition to him since his first creation; so that it is in the Adam nature, or in Adam, we die, and continue to die. My brother asks the question, “Did Adam die a spiritual death or not?” I answer unhesitatingly, No. How could he lose a life that he did not have? His life was a natural, not a spiritual life. See the connection. “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” – verses 46-49. The question is further propounded, “If he did not, how are we spiritually dead?” I do not find that the scriptures say anything about our being spiritually dead, nor do I think that the expression is a tenable one. Death is a destitution of life; and when we are destitute of it we are dead, so far as that life is concerned. It is true that we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins; but how can that be spiritual death if we never had spiritual life? The questions may arise, How then are we dead? When did the death occur? To answer these interrogatories, refer to Romans 5:12. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Walker describes death theologically to be “separation, or alienation from God; a being under the dominion of sin, and destitute of divine life; called [he says] spiritual death.” All this took place when man first sinned; for God drove him out of the garden of Eden and placed an impenetrable barrier there to prevent his re-entering it; and therefore he was separated from God, [which separation is death] alienated, became a wanderer from him, and has by nature ever since then been an “alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenant of promise,

having no hope, and without God in the world.” There then was separation from God while in sin, or in other words, “dead in sin.” This is neither a spiritual nor a corporeal death, but a separation from God, and that separation [or death] occurred on the very day when he had eaten of the tree which the Lord commanded him not to eat of; for God said, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” He did eat of the forbidden tree, and that day did die. Some who try to make it appear that this had reference to a corporeal death, quote II Peter 3:8, “that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” but that text has no reference to the subject under consideration. Again; others say that the forbidden fruit was an apple. Now I do not suppose that it was an apple, peach, pear, apricot, cherry, plum, nor anything of the kind. I think that it was *lust* of some kind, whether it was to be as gods or some other kind. We are told that “lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” It appears to me, that lust, an inordinate desire, was the first crime and sin, a disobedient act, a consequent one, that sealed our death in sin. Thus it is in Adam, or in our Adamic nature, that we all continue to die.

“Even so, in Christ, shall all be made alive.” In this expression the two paternal heads of the two generations or families [natural and spiritual] are brought to view; and as in the first all that are born of him die, even so, in the second, all that were given him of the Father shall be [in the future] made alive.

I think that neither the death nor the making alive has any reference to the spiritual family, for they never die, and of course cannot be *made* alive; for they have ever lived, and will live forever. But when death shall have done its work on those who were given him [Christ] of his Father, they shall all be made alive in Christ; for it is said in Isaiah 26:19, “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake; and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” And again, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.” O glorious hope of an all-glorious resurrection! “And we shall live in his sight;” yea, in his presence; in whose presence is fullness of joy; at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore. And what a life! Not one bruised and blackened, polluted and defiled with sin, as is our mortal life here, but a blissful life of immortality, eternal life, un-contaminated, therefore undying. “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

“But every man in his own order.” In whose own order? I suppose that it is in Christ’s own order that all his people will be raised; precisely in the order, manner or likeness in which he was raised; for then we shall see him as he is and be like

him. It is said in Acts 26:23, “That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead,” &c. And in Col.1:18, “And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” Of course, then, as he is the first born from the dead, his followers, as they are to be like him, will be born in the same order or likeness.

“Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Here allusion is had to the offerings of the first fruits under the Mosaic dispensation, which were typical symbols, pointing to Christ as the first fruits of them that slept. Those fruits were specimens of the following portion of the crop. “If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.” Of course, then, as before observed, “We shall see him as he is, and be like him,” raised in the same order. Yes, “afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Momentous inquiry!

“Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?”

Have we a comfortable evidence that we are his? What a cheering, joyful, exhilarating anticipation! The Lord will come to resurrect the purchase of his precious blood, and receive them to their blissful home. Majestic, awful, sublime appearing, when the “Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Submitted first to my dear brethren editors, and then, if published, to brother Russell and others who may think it worth their notice.

May I still be permitted to remain a brother in hope,

J. F. JOHNSON.

GEN.3:15 – TWO SEEDS.

Clay Village, Ky., Dec.20, 1880.

DEAR BRETHREN EDITORS OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES: - In the seventeenth number of the present volume of the SIGNS, I see some requests for my views on several passages of scripture, some of which I do not feel capacitated to write on at present. The first is from brother John K. Johnson, of Missouri, and as I have heretofore written and published my views on Rev.12:8, in my writings, I refer him to what is there written.

Then comes the request of U.J. Bell, saying, "Will brother J.F. Johnson, of Kentucky, give his views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, on Gen.3:15, especially on the seeds, and oblige one that desires a spiritual understanding of the scriptures." Incapable as I feel of instructing brother Bell, or others, I will try briefly to comply with his request.

The Lord is here speaking of some of the dreadful consequences that were to succeed the terrible fall of our primeval parents. That direful fall made it necessary for the exhibition of the glory of God, and the deliverance of his people, that a decisive conflict should occur between Christ, the seed of the woman according to the flesh, and the subtle serpent who had beguiled our original parentage.

In this conflict Christ was ordained to be delivered, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, into the hands of the serpent and his cohorts, to be crucified and slain. It ordained that he should save his people from their sins. Terrible fall! To bring upon the immaculate Son of God this mournful event. Poor man! Taken captive by the devil, led by a most implacable enemy, bound by the manacles of sin, and even delighted with the chains that bind him. But,

"Here Satan was nonplus'd in what he had done;
The fall wrought the channel where mercy should run,
In streams of salvation that never run dry,
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high."

With wonder and amazement we look back beyond the verge of time at the infinite counsel and prescience of God, in which it was decreed that the beloved Son of God should be brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He had done no violence, no deceit was found in his lips. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him," to put him to grief.

But in this tragical transaction the serpent and his seed acts a conspicuous part. By his subtilty he has plunged the entire race of man into a dismal vortex, and down, down they are going to inevitable ruin, where all must ultimately land, unless rescued by the arm of omnipotence. Could we see no further than this doleful scene, it seems that the serpent had achieved a final victory over the whole

family of poor imbecile man; but it opens the way for a final and decisive combat between the two seeds; and at a specific time the two belligerents must meet and decide this momentous contest. But my brother wants my views especially on the seeds. The seed here, as in many other places, has reference to posterity, or lineal, hereditary descent. The seed of the woman here, doubtless, refers to Christ, who is to bruise the serpent's head, but we identify with him all the election of grace, all that were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, all that are born of that incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth forever. "For a seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Ps.22:30.

The prophet announces the coming of this seed that was to bruise the serpent's head in the following language. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isa.7:14.

So far as the seed of Satan is concerned, we are not to understand that he has procreative or generating power to produce flesh and blood. When the Savior said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil," John 8:44, he had reference to him as the father of the wicked spirit that prompted them to act as they did; we might say their wicked spiritual father, as God is the father of his spiritual children.

That wicked spiritual seed of the serpent is called "the seed of the wicked," Psalm 30:28, "seed of evil doers," "children that are corrupters," Isa.1:4, while the Lord's spiritual children are called "the seed of the righteous," Prov.15:21, "the holy seed," Isa.6:13, "a godly seed," [*seed of God* – in the margin] Mal.2:15.

But the Lord said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," and that malevolence has existed between the two seeds ever since, and still remains in the same state of opposition that has ever characterized it. "It [the woman's seed] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Here the sanguinary contest, the bloody drama that must seal the destiny of myriads was announced. Like a long quarrel or irreconcilable controversy the strife went on until it finally came to blows. But what a combat! Indeed it seemed like a bloody assault of the one part, without any resistance on the other. The seed of the woman is dragged as a prisoner at the bar, but makes no resistance. Behold the meek and passive Son of God! Buffeted, spit upon, clothed with a mock robe and derisively hailed king of the Jews, crowned with piercing thorns, nailed to the cross – put to death. What was Satan and his cohorts aiming at here? To kill the Son, the Heir, and seize upon the inheritance. But they are engaged in a conflict with omnipotence. God's power and wisdom are making their wrath to praise him, to make that wrath work for the good, the salvation of his people and the glory of his name. What! Is Satan working for the salvation of God's people? He certainly did in that case, though unconsciously, work to accomplish that very end. He and his

allies put the Savior to death, and that death, though they slew him with “wicked hands,” a wicked design, and were therefore inexcusable; yet that death completed the eternal redemption of his people, their everlasting and full salvation from their sins. Thus the serpent bruised his heel. But why was it said, Bruised his heel? The heel is the lower and hinder part of the body. The Mediator, or man Christ Jesus existed ere time began; but his body followed; was “made of a woman, made under the law.” Hence it was the afterpart, and he was put to death in the flesh. Therefore, it was his body, after part, or heel that was bruised.

But he was to bruise the serpent’s head. His highest aspirations were to be contravened or defeated. Hence the apostle said, “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Heb.2:14,15. Thus the serpent’s highest calculations and most sanguine anticipations were destroyed, and wonderful to think, it was done by “*death.*”

“But see the wonders of his power;
He triumphs in the dying hour;
And though by Satan’s rage he fell,
He dashed the rising hopes of hell.”

But does not the serpent still continue to bruise the heel of the woman’s seed? His people here on the earth constitute the lower and latter, or hinder part of his body, the church, and how often we feel with sore dismay his daily bruises.

“But let not all this terrify,
Pursue the narrow path;
Look to the Lord with steadfast eye,
And fight the fight of faith.”

Jesus has bruised, and will continue to bruise the head of the serpent. In the first open conflict he bruised his head – destroyed his works on Calvary, made him the unconscious agent of pulling down his own diabolical kingdom, and will continue to bruise until he, upon whom the spirit of the Lord is, shall be pleased “to set at liberty them that are bruised,” as the apostle has said to his brethren, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” Rom.16:20. Thus a conflict was promulgated in the bud of time between two contending powers, one almighty, the other permissive; for when the serpent was permitted to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman on Calvary it was in exact accordance with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. These two contending powers have been engaged in

deadly conflict ever since its annunciation, and these powers will continue to be active belligerents as long as time endures. The religion of Christ and the religion of anti-christ both receive impetus from those powers, and the warfare will continue to rage until one is finally and effectually subdued. But it is a conflict of no doubtful eventuality, no doubtful termination.

One of the agents that gives impetus to this conflict is omnipotent, the other only permissively. The struggle that the child of God is daily engaged in is the result of the working of these agencies. The spirit that works in the children of disobedience operates in the flesh and its opposite in the spirit, in consequence of which the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. But from the time of the ringing of the tocsin of war until now, the battle has been raging; but the seed of the woman has long achieved a signal victory, and has it in reserve for each of his followers, and each one may eventually say, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory."

Yours as ever,

J. F. JOHNSON.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

Clay Village, Ky., March 11, 1881.

MY DEAR BROTHER BEEBE: - After some solemn reflections this morning, I have concluded to pen some desultory reminiscences of my past life in connection with others near my own age, including yourself. In the obituary department of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, what a large proportion of the notices inform us of the demise of brethren and sisters, near, and even over our ages. It reminds me that ere long, we too, "must go the way of all the earth." I think of the companions of my youth, and ask myself, Where are they? Gone, gone never to return. Then I think with Newton,

"Former friends, O how I've sought them!
Just to cheer my drooping mind;
But they're gone like leaves of autumn,
Driven before a dreary wind."

Does it not seem strange to us when we look from our eighty-first year, and consider the speedy flight of time, and yet how many stirring events are crowded into that little space? When I retrospect my former life, and remember the seeming hair-breadth escapes of that life I have witnessed, it appears to be a miracle that I yet live, and can attribute it to but one thing, and that is, it pleased the Lord to preserve me. I was reckless as to danger, although I had kind and pious parents to watch over and warn me; and although I was considered rather a moral boy, never was considered profane, either in my conduct or conversation, yet I can look back and say with the poet, Watts,

“Here on my heart the burden lies,
And past offenses pain my eyes.”

My first twenty-seven years were wholly spent in vanity. After that period I began to fear that all was not right with me; and then, if all the powers of my vile nature could have dethroned grace, it would have been done; but thanks be to God, grace reigns, and will and must reign, and I humbly hope did reign in my case. But before I was through with my awfully increasing distress, I was anxious enough to implore relief from any source.

Before this I had known nothing about the exceeding sinfulness of sin, nothing about grace, nothing about religion of any kind except such as I could obtain by my own works. But such a sinner as I then saw myself to be was an awful, awful sight indeed. There I lay one night after a long struggle to make myself better, a miserable, condemned sinner, and justly condemned too, when the never to be forgotten words were spoken to my heart, [not to my natural ears] “The Master is come and calleth for thee,” thrilled through me, and all my trouble was gone. And afterward, when I saw plainly, [not with my natural eyes] the lovely face of my dear Redeemer, my joy, if possible, surpassed what my grief had been. The world and all its vanities were nothing to me then. I little expected then to encounter the doubts and fears, the tribulation and distress that awaited me. But those doubts and fears soon began to annoy me, and have still continued to harass me to this day. But sorer trouble awaited me. It was when it was impressed upon my mind to preach the gospel. I thought I knew as well as I could know anything that I never could do it, and the awful thought of such a sinner attempting so sacred a work, was it not blasphemy? And the wonder was, why could I not banish it from my mind and trouble myself no more about it? But the terrible words, “Keep not silence,” Isa.62:6, harassed me continually. But after the church called on me to exercise my gift [if I had any,] and I made some attempts to do so, these troubles gradually wore off. The next trouble was the division of the church on the subject of “three persons in the Godhead.” Myself and a few others could not

conscientiously indorse the sentiment. There had previously been much controversy on that subject in the churches and associations in Ohio and Indiana, and they had finally settled on an agreement that it should not be a test of fellowship. Finally, a candidate presented himself to the church for reception, and the pastor of the church asked him if he indorsed that article. He replied that he could not fully indorse the idea that he understood those words to convey. He was then told that he could not be received into that church. I then arose and observed that that article had caused much contention among the Baptists, and they finally agreed that it should not be a bar of fellowship; that Lebanon church had through her pastor made it a bar; and if it must remain one, put it up against me, for I did not believe it. It raised a terrible storm over me, which continued to rage for about eighteen months. At first, I suppose three-fourths of the church were opposed to me, mostly relatives or connections of the pastor. Finally, at the time of the division, out of over eighty members, twenty-two went with them, and the others remained with us. There were then mutual exclusions on both sides; but in a few months they came back, made acknowledgements, and were received, not very cordially, however, by myself and some others. Not long afterward the *means* controversy came up, and the same ones, with one exception only, went off with that error. The truth of the case was, they found themselves out in the cold alone in the first instance, in the second they had company to suit them.

Since those divisions I have lived in peace with the churches where I have labored without an exception. Have had the pastoral care of thirteen or fourteen churches in Indiana, New York and Kentucky, but have always made a rule never to accept a call from any church if I knew of one member in good standing in the church that objected to me as pastor. Of four churches which I have served for from seventeen to twenty years, if there ever has been or is now a solitary member opposed to me as the pastor I have never known it, but attribute it more to the forbearance of the brethren than to my own merits. I have always thought too, that they placed a higher estimate upon my poor labors than they deserved.

How thankful I should be, for the sweet union and fellowship I have enjoyed with the dear saints, not only about home, but where I have so extensively traveled; for I suppose that since the beginning of my ministerial labors I have traveled a distance that would reach more than three times around the globe.

Notwithstanding the trials and tribulations I have passed through, I can say with the apostle, "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." II Thes.2:14. What could I enjoy in this sin-polluted world if deprived of the companionship and social worship with the saints.

I suppose it has been forty years or more, brother Beebe, since I became first acquainted with you, and it has been truly a very pleasant, and to me, a very profitable acquaintance. I believe there is but eighteen days' difference in our ages. I very well recollect the first conversation we had together; each one of us had four sons and three daughters. Now, each of us have a son that is a preacher of the Old School Baptist order. So far as I have discovered there has been a happy oneness in our religious sentiments. I hope we have learned at the same old school and under the same Teacher. We have traveled and labored considerably together, and that has added much to the interest that I have felt in the acquaintance, for I have learned much thereby, and also have received much comfort as well as instruction. How many thousands of the dear saints have been comforted, encouraged and instructed by your editorials and through the correspondence of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Your paper has been of incalculable value to the Old School or Primitive Baptists. Your arduous labors have no doubt bound you to thousands. I know it has been thus with me, and the unanimity that has seemed to exist between you and me makes me hope that we are bound together with inseverable ties. What can separate us?

You have been assailed too, by some very small fault-finders. But what has that amounted to? Simply to bind you closer to your brethren. Some of them seemed to try to make a considerable show, and raised a fog or dust, and perhaps thought they did. I have heard of a bull that was pawing up the dust at a wonderful rate, while a fly that sat on his horn was crying out, "See what a dust I have raised." May God sustain you, my dear brother, as long as it is his will that you should feed and instruct his children; and when he bids you to lay your armor by, may he enable you to say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I wish to say a few words to the patrons of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Brethren, I fear we are not doing as much to sustain our family paper as we should. There are many indigent brethren and sisters to whom brother Beebe sends the paper gratis. Might not many of us do the same? When divided among many it would be but a small matter to each one. I pay for two such brethren besides my own subscription, and perhaps that is not as much as I should do. Now, dear brethren, let me entreat you to send on remittances for one or two, or more of your poor brethren if you are able to do so; it may aid brother Beebe very much, and not be perceptibly felt among so many. Remember what your Savior says: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

It has been my high privilege, too, to have had the acquaintance of my venerable and very highly esteemed brother T.P. Dudley for more than the fourth of a century. I think I can safely say that I have never discovered a fault in him, and that is saying a good deal. His ability, amiableness, brotherly kindness and christian deportment have endeared him to many, very many. It would be hard to find a more companionable brother anywhere. Many of his brethren and friends who have heard of his almost hopeless condition as to health, will be glad to learn the word I had from him last was he was about well. I think he will be eighty-nine years old on the last of May next, and an able and faithful minister of the New Testament for more than sixty years.

I believe that the two venerable brethren that I have named, are the only gospel ministers with whom I have been so long and intimately acquainted that are now living; and when I consider the affliction through which we have been called to pass, and the tender, parental care exercised toward us, it makes them feel very near and dear to me; though it does not lessen the esteem I have for my younger brethren in the ministry, nor the appreciation of their labors. In years that are gone by I have been acquainted with many brethren in the ministry that were near my age, but where are they now?

“As the annual frosts are cropping,
Leaves and tendrils from the trees,
So my friends are yearly dropping,
Through old age and dire disease.”

But again,

“Where are those we counted leaders?
Filled with love, and zeal, and truth?
Old professors tall as cedars,
Bright examples for our youth.”

My dear aged brethren, let us patiently abide our time while the flickering taper of our mortal lamp continues faintly to glow; and when it shall have gone out, may we fall asleep in the arms of Jesus, awake in his likeness, and so ever be with the Lord.

J. F. JOHNSON.

THE JUDGMENT.

Clay Village, Ky., July, 1881.

DEAR BRETHREN BEEBE: - Brother J.F. Huckaby, of Dallas, Miss., desires me to write on the idea of a general judgment, and critical examination, that Arminians say is to occur after the end of this world; that there will be a special trial and close investigation of the deeds done in the body here, and many witnesses called up to testify to the conduct of each individual person; as though the Lord did not know what was going on in the world without calling on men to instruct him. I recollect once hearing a Methodist preacher paraphrase on the text in Heb.9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment," &c. He pointed out a critical trial that was to take place "after death." As he quoted the text, [perhaps himself to be one of the witnesses,] "but," he observed, "some don't believe in such a judgment as this; but the scriptures are too plain on this point to be denied." Then he quoted, "He shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment *to come*," emphasizing heavily on *to come*, [his own interpolation] when, had he quoted on, he might have seen that the judgment had already come. "Of sin, because of unbelief; of unrighteousness, because I go to my Father," &c.; "of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Now, by reference to the scriptures, we may form an opinion about this judgment. "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification." Rom.5:16. And again, "Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," &c. It appears from these texts that the judgment is already passed. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this [this appointment] the judgment," &c., so that after this appointment unto men once to die, then the judgment immediately followed. Brother Huckaby refers me to the text in II Cor.5:11, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body," [of Christ, which is the church.] I therefore conclude it is the church we are to appear before to give this account, for there it is that a "King shall reign in righteousness, and princes [the apostles] shall rule in judgment." His irreversible decree has settled, and settled forever, the happy destiny of his people, and the rest were "of old foreordained to this condemnation." Jude 4. The Lord will not find it necessary to assemble the nations together after this world, having already passed judgment upon all men. No, his fiat is fixed, his decision irrevocable. Paul says, "Behold, I

show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” No time for litigation here. Instead of being subjected to a future trial or judgment, “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” The Lord is not like poor, imbecile man; for “there are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” Prov.19:21. No new devices or new combination of new ideas. Hear what he says: “I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” Isa.46:10.

Now, my dear brother, if our sins were laid on Jesus, and he bare them on the cross, they went to judgment then and there, and were buried in oblivion forever. No arraying them against us in judgment after the affairs of this world are wound up; for then to us the welcome trumpet shall sound, and we shall be raised incorruptible.

Your friend and brother most truly,

J. F. JOHNSON.

THIS ENDS THE WRITINGS OF J.F. JOHNSON.

Obituary Notice

G. BEEBE'S SONS - DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST: By request of our deeply afflicted sister Johnson, I write, briefly, to inform the brethren and readers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, of the death of Elder J.F. Johnson. He passed one week ago today, Tuesday, Sept. 27, 1881, in his 81st year. Though conscious of the near approach of the time of his departure, he had but little to say, seemingly wrapped in his own silent meditations. His history as an able minister and writer is too well and widely known for me to even attempt to say anything to his memory in this brief notice. He ever had a word of cheer and comfort to Zion's afflicted, and like your dear father, never turned his back to the enemies of truth. But he is gone, gone to his eternal rest, no more to mix and mingle in the conflict of life. We miss him, we mourn his departure, but we should remember that it is the Captain of Israel's hosts that has called him from the field of carnage and strife, and now with a crown of glory on his head, the folds of his banner sweep open to the gentle breeze of heaven, and on it written in letters of living light is VICTORY over the last enemy. May God in his mercy comfort his dear wife and children, together with the churches he has served so long and faithfully, and may he give the spirit of reconciliation to his will, and a desire;

“For faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink,
Of any earthly foe.

That will not murmur or complain,
Beneath the chastening rod;
But in the hour of grief and pain,
Will lean upon its God.

A faith that shines more bright and clear,
When tempests rage about,
That, when in danger, knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss,
Of an eternal home.”

With much love, I am your brother in tribulation and hope,

J. TAYLOR MOORE.
Georgetown, KY., OCT. 4, 1881.