

THE STUMBLING-STONE.

"BEHOLD I LAY IN SION A STUMBLING-STONE AND ROCK OF OFFENCE."

VOL. 5,

TOLEDO, Ohio. JULY; 1878.

NO. 1

Published monthly subject, only like all regular publications, to God's providence which we recognize. James 4: 13.

Sent to all who send us their names as subscribers, and who pay, or engage to pay, or for whom with their consent, other persons pay the cost of publication, which we estimate at 25 cents a year for a single copy. This is what the Postal laws constitute a regular paper with regular subscribers entitled to go through the mails at pound rates.

Those wishing the paper continued must renew their subscription each year.

Those who are able and love the truth send us many times the cost of the paper that it may be sent to as many as possible who want it.

Contributions cheerfully given for this work will be accepted as from the Lord. Send to LYMAN H. JOHNSON, Drawer 105 TOLEDO, OHIO.

The Lord's Field.

Brethren would be greatly encouraged to know all we know of the Lord's work, in this and other countries. We would gladly print more of the precious letters we are receiving if we had time and room besides the truth God has called us to print.

In nearly every state and territory of this country, in Canada or Ontario, Nova Scotia are pilgrim bands from whom we hear, who have no other door but Christ, no lines of separation but righteousness and sin, no church but what God has made and which exists in heaven as on earth, same organism.

The largest number of whom we know in any one locality, perhaps, is in Pennsylvania, York and Cumberland counties; Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, N. York state, Illinois, Alabama, Texas, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, Kansas, Nebraska, Arkansas, Missouri, West Virginia, New Jersey, Mass. British provinces, etc.; these are the principal fields in nearly the order of interest and importance so far as we know, besides precious names from other states and territories. No one belongs to this host of God's elect who is not where the martyrs stood, ready to suffer all reproach and death for this gospel truth and righteousness.

There are thousands doubtless from whom we have not heard, although this Stumblingstone, like a magnet when it touches particles of steel in a pile of dust, by its searching truth is finding and drawing out the genuine pilgrims everywhere, in this and other countries. Multitudes are beginning to see, and a few dare to walk in the LIGHT!

The Stumblingstone is not doing so much to open the eyes of the people to the iniquity of sect organizations as they themselves are doing by theatricals, shows, fairs, sensual tricks, gambling, lying and what not for money, besides an excess of pride and every lust which out does the world!

What is Our Offense?

Will our enemies please answer.

Reproach is our promised heritage if we follow Christ. But we ask you to weigh your objections to the Stumblingstone, come down to facts in detail and see whether this paper or its accusers are on the Lord's or the devil's side. Let the Bible be our judge. Base your charges on Scripture.

1, You say that we attack and oppose churches. When? Where have we ever attacked or opposed a church, so called in the Bible? We find here only saints of a place called church of a place. The body of Christ was his church, says Paul Col: 1. We find no existing sect or denomination in Scripture. The Pharisees and Saducees were denominations like ours, but they were not called churches. The church of Ephesus, or Corinth, or Rome was only the body of Christ in that city. You never find the church of Rome or Corinth or any other place in any city or place besides. If a church had been man's organism as our sects, we would find a church of Corinth at Rome and other cities. But no Bible church was a sect or denomination as now; it was Christ's body here and there, having no other distinction except the different places where they lived.

Have I ever printed a line against Christ's body any where? Have I said a word against the church of Toledo or any other city or place? By the Bible meaning, the only meaning of the word church, your charge is proved false, for I have never opposed, but always defended and upheld the churches.

I have opposed men's inventions of modern times called churches, but are not the body of Christ, nor found in Scripture; counterfeits of the genuine. How could this be God's paper and fail to attack such dangerous counterfeits? Religious institutions not a century old, got up since God's church and

gospel plan was finished, as all sect churches are came from the devil and not from God, they add to and take from his Word, exalt man above God, and treat him with the most brazen insolence imaginable!

God is not to be mocked by these patent labor or cross saving machines of modern improvement, called churches of which Christ is neither head, door, foundation nor any other part. To denounce these abominations is to preach the word of God. Your very charge against the stumblingstone proves it to be God's faithful paper, and places our accusers on the ground of all enemies to his holy word.

2 You say that this Stumblingstone slanders the innocent, speaks evil of others. This is a serious charge. Show one instance where a syllable is uttered in it falsely against any one. You cannot find it. It is not speaking evil to speak truthfully of evil men. Jesus and all his martyrs suffered death for this very fidelity; because they told the truth of hypocrites and wicked men. You know this very objection against this paper is what exasperated Jews and all persecutors against Jesus and his followers of every age, and hence betrays your identity with all his enemies.

3, You say yes, this paper is Bible truth, but the spirit of it is bad. Well, now we are at our wits end! How shall we know the spirit? If good fruit is no longer proof of a good spirit, where are we? How do we know that we are not Satan's tools if the fruits of righteousness, Bible truth are no index? A good thing cannot produce evil, nor an evil thing that which is good. I often hear such nonsense about the sects. They say that sects are good things but a sect spirit is a bad thing! So a good thing may have a bad spirit, and a bad thing a good spirit! This kind of talk may do for those who are determined to believe lies, but will not answer for the pure in heart, nor for men of common sense or honesty. Out of the same heart cannot flow bitter waters and sweet.

If the Stumblingstone is Bible and God's truth, then those who hate its spirit are haters of God and are under the power of Satan. No man ever faithfully preached the hated Bible truth without the Spirit of truth. It is an impossibility and contradiction. Satan is not divided against himself. He never assaults his own works of hypocrisy and sin with God's word. Beware then, all you who own this printed word against modern apostasy to be Bible truth while you hate its spirit, and say it is of the devil. Remember what Jesus said of this same blasphemy by those who said he cast out devils by Beelzebub. Unless you are changed you will surely be surprised with all the disappointed, when you meet him who is the way and the TRUTH, the original Stumblingstone whom the false professors have always rejected. 1Pet. 2: 8.

4, You say that the gospel is all love and tenderness for sinners, but this Stumblingstone is full of bitterness and severity, therefore it is not the right spirit, and stirs up strife and a bad feeling towards the wrong doer.

This is just the reasoning of all God's enemies, and of the guilty always against righteous government, and of modern evangelists who get converts by preaching a gospel without law or any offense, God already reconciled in Christ to all the wicked. At this point is the dividing line this paper draws, and Scripture too, between the kingdom of Christ and antichrist, God and the devil. This is the vital question, Does the gospel strip God's law of its severity and wrath toward the false, perversely wicked and unyielding? Let the Bible decide, and not the feelings or sympathies of rebel souls.

How does Jesus treat sectarians and false professors? John 10: 1, He says that those who enter the church by any other door besides himself are "THIEVES and ROBBERS." Every member of a sect has entered by another door. Have I ever called such persons harder names than this? Again he says to the two leading sects who heard him, the Pharisees and Saducees, "Ye serpents, generation of vipers, — Hypocrites, — Whited sepulchres, — How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" You can find no language of this paper so harsh or terrible as this against modern sects although these have divided, changed and corrupted the gospel church from God's original plan far worse than the Jewish sects did the church of their day. There is a tremendous mistake somewhere. Either you don't know Jesus, or else he did have a devil as the Jews said he did.

If tenderness of words for God's enemies is a proof of his Spirit, then Jesus certainly had a devil, for he never spoke softly to such in his preaching, nor did any other Bible preacher. O reader, which side are you on in this momentous question?

Did not Paul know how to preach the gospel? He says, Romans 1, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness. — To them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil. — God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Paul says again of those who turned the Gentile believers from the sufficiency of Christ alone to carnal organizations for security and perfection, "Let them be accursed, — Again I say unto you though it be myself or an angel from heaven, let him be accursed." He also said to Elymas who sought to turn the Deputy from the faith of Jesus, "Thou full of all subtlety and mischief, thou child of the devil." I need not cite more. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is full of such language to the wicked, and there is not a word of tenderness for corrupters of the church nor hypocrites, nor for the wilful impenitent, but uniform and constant severity and threatening of wrath and fiery indignation.

Hebrews 10, and 12 chapters show that under the gospel wilful sin has greater severity and terror of administration than under Moses, "For our God is a consuming fire."

BUT COULDN'T YOU DO MORE GOOD BY Milder means? Yes, doubtless I could, as the world estimate doing good. I could get converts a hundred times easier, as Moody and all modern revivalists, than I could by adopting God's method of doing good. What, shall rebel sinners dictate terms to God? What sort of conversion is that which brings the law to the sinner's will and pleasure, instead of the law being the will and pleasure?

Your very complaint against this paper and plea of tenderness for those who trample mercy in the dust, betrays your own heart rebellion and ignorance of the Bible and its God, whose love you would pervert into a license and covering for iniquity! Your error is of appalling magnitude. There is no greater outrage on Jesus, than to take the dying groans and blood of Calvary to shield the wilful idolatry, sectism, blasphemy and horrible wickedness of modern anti-christ, false churches, forged bodies of Christ which are not his body, but an organized lie. The God of Elijah who cut off the heads of the false prophets, corrupters of ancient Israel, then went to heaven in a chariot of fire, is the same God today, and his fury burns more fiercely than ever toward corrupters of his church now, and those who daub them with the untempered mortar of false tenderness and love! O, awake from your delusive dreams of peace and security, for vengeance is on the wing! Although it has delayed long, it is not slack as men count slackness. Its patient delay for men to repent, only accumulates fierceness to the fury that must break on the guilty when mercy has spent its power to save!

This paper is not a mouth-piece for man, but for God, and we are obliged to speak what and to whom he directs. We use mildness where the Bible uses mildness, and severity where it uses severity; like Scripture adapting the word to the characters addressed. If you hate the spirit of this fidelity to the Bible, I leave you to settle your controversy with him whose Spirit you oppose.

Tracts by D. F. Newton.

Those wanting any of his useful and readable tracts, by applying for them at the address of the Stumblingstone can obtain them.

A new volume entitled: "LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL, AND LIGHT ON A CANDLESTICK," is now being set up soon to be ready, a very important book for the times. Also his old books are being reprinted, which formerly had a ready sale. Any persons who will act as agents for their sale will not only confer temporal aid on a brother who is worthy, but especially will greatly benefit for time and eternity every family and people where his works are scattered.

"HE WING A GAGS."

This book which we have sent for twenty five cents, we will now send for three cents each, that it may go on its gospel errand. People do not love to pay the cost of books they most need.

FAITH VS. SIGHT.

By BURNELL D. JOHNSON.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2nd Cor. 5:7.

All Christians know that the very foundation of christian experience consists in an unconditional surrender and exclusive reliance upon God to save and preserve in every emergency, and the moment our hearts turn in doubt or distrust to anything else whatever we become strangers to this experience.

From the earliest periods of time we may notice the disposition of rebellious human nature to correct and improve upon God's simple and plain requirements. This is specially noticeable in the constant tendency to make the religion of Christ, (which is necessarily spiritual, inward, of the heart,) conformable to man's wisdom, a tangible, external, visible concern, which the natural heart unchanged can perfectly appreciate and understand.

As the inward experience departed from the ancient church, externals were substituted, innumerable inventions were introduced and continued to accumulate until, though "beautiful indeed outwardly," (human wisdom can only act upon the exterior of character, hence can only make hypocrites!) she was indeed a "cage of unclean birds." Among the first "improvements" introduced were images and pictures, with the very plausible pretext that they were a great "help" in fixing the attention etc. Alas had they not lost that inward experience of faith which is "the substance of things hoped for," which brings the invisible God to our view and makes him our present and eternal portion? And in the absence of this, no wonder they felt the necessity of something to supply the deficiency. But in the reformation of the 16th century a return was effected, in some degree to primitive gospel simplicity.

But should we suppose that the subtle deceiver of the nations has withdrawn attention from his great work, the deception and eternal destruction of mankind, from the fact that his once successful plans, suited only for times of great ignorance, passed away with those times? On the contrary we are taught that as time nears its end he will be increasingly earnest and successful.

We may flatter ourselves, and hire flattering lips, and may readily believe that great progress is being made religiously, but have we no reason to fear that the standard of faith now so popular is a far lower one than that of the Bible, as illustrated by Christ, apostles and martyrs? I need not affirm it. Who would question it? There is nothing plainer than that subtle deception is preying upon the "vitals" of experimental godliness in our land; yea already genuine, unyielding faith, gospel principle, is the rare, very rare exception among God's professed people, if actual fruits are any indication. But many who see and deplore this spiritual desolation seem to be supremely ignorant as to its real and essential cause and are blindly but effectually contributing to this, cause. It can be only too apparent to the impartial observer that the same practical unbelief which was the source and essence of the apostasy of ancient Israel when the golden calf was made, or of the church at Rome and her contemporaries when the innumerable "works of their own hands" were substituted for "the faith of Jesus," is not only alarmingly prevalent, but its principles have been inculcated by a hireling ministry until the original, Bible plan is everywhere considered "insecure" and "impracticable!" It seems to be really supposed that learned men have conceived and effected vast improvements, both in point of accessibility and security, over the crucifying way of faith. The pleas of modern unbelief are plausible when viewed from the standpoint of human wisdom or of the "fool" who saith "there is no God." But one to whom the "way of truth" is experimentally known is too well satisfied to return to the broken cisterns of man's invention.

"How are ministers and missionary enterprises to be supported without a human order and system? Is the Bible our standard, or custom and tradition? How were Paul and Peter supported, and the grand 'missionary enterprise' after the Pentecost, when the faithful, driven by persecution 'went every where preaching the gospel?' 'All the times have changed, no one would preach under such circumstances now.' Here is the test! All ministers who would not, who cannot say with Paul 'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel,' are self-evidently hirelings and deceivers! Hence the only advantage of man's systems in this direction is to bribe and disperse greedy hirelings who are willing to make any sacrifice of truth to secure selfish ends and the upbuilding of party interests. Here we discover the withering curse, the climax of Satan's devices to lower the gospel standard and bring the world into its present condition!

"But how are converts to be kept together? They must have a home."

God says his children are kept by his power through faith, if a man-made organism, not mentioned in Scripture, can keep Christians together; why attempt

to serve two masters, and not rather dispense entirely with the Bible plan, which has omitted so important an item as the believer's security. "Must have a home." If you mean an earthly home such as Christ his apostles and the thousands who were driven "everywhere" by persecutions, those who dwelt in dens and caves of the earth, wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy, did not possess; I cannot so understand the gospel. Paul said, "Here we have no continuing city but seek one to come whose builder and maker is God."

True all children of God must and will meet together, will "exhort one another daily" and improve every opportunity of encouraging each other, but the Bible everywhere teaches us that christians are peculiarly "pilgrims and strangers" in an enemy's land. Modern professors who lack the inward experience of love which unites inseparably all who love the same Christ, feel the necessity of an outward bond, and are, by the modern invention, provided with a "home" consisting of a stately temple, similar to what is provided by all other earthly religions, Pagan, Mohamedan and Papal, this "home" is furnished with cushioned pews, exquisite music, and every attraction which would charm and please the most determined rebel under God's government. And the presiding priest is bound to say nothing which would disturb the unruffled calm, but tickles their ears with smooth words of "Peace Peace" as they quietly "sail on flowery beds of ease" into paradise. (?) Yes into the presence of "the man of sorrows" who "had not where to lay his head." And who said, "The disciple is not greater than his lord, if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub how much more shall they call them of his household."

O should we not regret that Christ was unacquainted with this remarkable plan which then as now would have effectually removed the cross, the only barrier to his triumphant political success? Then how eagerly would Judas and every one of those proud pharisees have welcomed and proclaimed him their Messiah and king!

Since penning the above, I heard from the pulpit, such language as this; "There are doubtless some who are strong enough to live religion outside of the church, but the mass of christians would quickly backslide if deprived of this 'home', Hence it is necessary."

Paul says the church is Christ's body, and he that is so strong as to live religion outside of it is indeed a stout hearted rebel against God!

If he mean's any other than this church it must be a counterfeit, for I read of no other in Scripture and it would be absurd to suppose that Christ was the head of more than one body. We have only to know whether such a "home" was included in the plan of salvation revealed to man in the Bible, to judge of its character, for God says; "If any man shall add to these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

No man will dare assume that there is the shadow of an intimation of such a necessity in God's Bible. Such teachers as the above, would say; "A part of the just shall live by faith," and the remainder who have not faith shall live by favorable surroundings and artificial supports! If God's word is true the first only are truly just, hence the latter who possess no faith are on y deceived, and as even this sectarian minister admits they are the masses!

Friends is this the character of a large portion of our christianity? If so where are we?

But says one; "These things are bad indeed but what can I do? I will remain inside the sect and exert my influence against the tide of iniquity." Very well, and upon the same principle patronize a grogshop occasionally while laboring to destroy the curse of intemperance. In either case your practice and position belie and more than counteracts all your words. Remember it is the addition to God's word, (which you propose to countenance by your presence and conformity,) which is the foundation, the essence of the apostasy. What saith God of this Babylon, (confusion) the daughters of the mother of harlots; "Come out of her in y people," and why? "That ye be not partakers of her sins; and that ye receive not of her plagues."

The Religion of the Bible.

The pure and undefiled is but little known in these times. Going to church, as it is called, hearing a nice sermon and fancy singing, attending Sabbath school prayer meetings, and a round of religious forms, and paying well the corporation which trade in these commodities, make up the whole of the prevailing christianity. But O, how far from the New Testament Idea! The carnal Jewish priesthood had as good as this, and yet were denounced by Jesus as sure of damnation. How quickly their jealousy was roused by a faith that threw their temple and carnal organization aside,

with all its religious attendants, and cut off the revenue of the system; a faith that required no going up to Jerusalem to worship, but made God's kingdom and church to exist within the hearts of believers; a faith that substituted righteousness of heart and life, for all the externals and ceremonies of carnal religion. No venom of murderous hate was ever so indignant as was shown toward Jesus and all his faithful martyrs by these devotees of the outward religion. The Romish priesthood had its jealousy aroused to the same persecuting malice by all the Protestant reformations, which held up Christ dwelling within and manifested by a life of holiness as constituting the sum and substance of true religion; thus abandoning the whole expensive ritual and organism of Papal Rome, cutting off the livings of her priesthood. Millions of martyrs were put to death for this very faith, taking Christ alone and exerting the jealousy of moneyed corporations called churches, which made a trade of carnal religion. And it was these men of faith in Jesus, having the church within, that while forced to worship in garrets and cellars, or dens and caves and forrest retreats to escape violence and death, who made more genuine converts to Jesus and righteousness than Moody and all other revivalists ever made in regular church organizations and great congregations. The true church of God has always been more effectually built up, preserved, established and purified when scattered by fiery persecutions and without earthly sanctuaries, or any possibility of carnal organization or security of human systems, money or civil support and protection. These are facts of history.

The church of Jesus Christ is spread, purified and built up most effectually when most persecuted by government, and most deprived of riches, learning, and every earthly advantage. When the saints at Jerusalem were scattered by persecution they "went everywhere preaching the gospel." So it has always been. The purest and best state of the church in England, France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland, was when they met in garrets, cellars and forrest retreats, to escape persecution, or had the least of the outward advantage of money systems, organizations, or meeting houses. The best state of the church of Jesus in America you know was when they met in log school-houses and dwellings, with no choirs nor modern improvements, but plain, earnest men and women gathered to worship God, and no sect organism was thought of, nor meeting-house, nor stylish dress, nor polished preaching or singing was known, but simplicity and earnestness, judgment day solemnity, marked the gatherings of those who came to worship God, and not a sect, nor house, nor style and art. So in New Testament times the Gentile believers had no external rite nor system, nor sacred house, nor anything but God, and his Christ. They never went to church, but had the church within, and where two or three met in Jesus name there was the church, for each saint was a temple, a walking sanctuary. 1 Cor. 3.

The great distinction of Bible religion is that it has nothing but God, its whole system or kingdom is within the hearts of believers and not outside, nor any thing got up by men. Jesus says, "Whoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him it shall be within him a well of water springing up to everlasting life." The within salvation or kingdom which makes a man independent of all outside sanctuaries or systems, or rituals, is what distinguishes this divine organization, the church of the New Testament.

The mass of modern religionists are just as blind to God's church organization as the Jews were. They cannot understand it. They don't know Christ's baptism, because they have only John's or Moses'; the veil is yet on their faces.

This is why modern christianity has lost its moral power. Men are saints on Sunday and at church, but devils on week days, or in their business. The religion of our times is a religion of outward conditions; and not of inward principle, hence it is as false and corrupt as the devil can wish.

Is it any wonder that churches are fast being turned into theatres and show houses, and preachers and singers into mount-bank performers for money! O, what horrible mockery everywhere of the religion of Jesus! What abomination of desolation in the holy place! Converts are made indeed, but converts to what? Religious indeed, but without righteousness! Get blessed and happy in meetings, tattle and cheat and frolic outside. Such is modern christianity so called.

NEW TESTAMENT ORGANIZATION.

I am repeatedly asked if they did not have an organization in the New Testament church. I answer if they did, why is it not adopted, and why have men got up, over six hundred different organi-

zations, splitting up Christ's body in violation of his special law of unity? If the organization is given in the New Testament, why do believers differ so endlessly about it? Did the Jews differ so about the organization by Moses? No; because when God appoints an organization he makes it so plain that they cannot differ about it. But because God has appointed no outward system, but men through unbelief, unwilling to stand by faith or take Christ alone, have invented rites and rules and systems of their own, and by perverted texts latched them on to the Bible, they have brought confusion and jargon into God's house, turned Christ's body into bedlam, or Babel, and six hundred parties all claiming Christ cannot worship in harmony under the same roof. This is the most horrible wickedness this world ever saw!

God has a church organization made by himself, but which damnable sects have split up and well nigh destroyed. Men are made members of God's church by entering Christ, the door and head and foundation. No other way. God sets the members in the body as it pleases him, baptized into his body by his spirit. See 1 Cor. 12, and also 3 chapters, etc. The church had no rules but what God gave it, no officers but God appointed. Men chose deacons to take care of money matters, but the church existed with complete organism before deacons. God made all apostles, elders, teachers, etc., not man. Ordination by the church was a mere recognition of what God had made, and gave no authority to elders or ministers of God.

Letters from Brethren.

Delta, Clay co. Ala. April, 1878.

Brother Johnson, our hearts were made to rejoice last Sabbath morning whilst reading the contents of the Stumbling-stone. During the long absence of that lovely sheet we rejoiced, while a few of us were sad. But thanks be to God who is a strong hold in the day of trouble, in the midst of the awfulest gloom that has passed over us, unexpectedly the light broke in, the clouds were dispersed, and all was brightness. Dear Brother, there are a few names here who would aid you in sending the truth abroad if they were able. But some work to day for what they eat tomorrow and all are in debt, and poor, for one can say that if it is God's will that I should ever handle any more money a part of the same will go as free as water to aid in the spread of the much loved truth. —If the Lord wills I will preach at Bro. Carters house next Sabbath. Dear Brother, we find many like Peter when he warmed himself around the fire. Some confess the Stumbling-stone is truth, but when persecution is hurled on me and that distracted Johnson, and others, they stand aloof and know nothing about the matter. The love of popularity is killing thousands. I give you the names of families who love the Stumbling-stone: W. C. Hamil, Chulafinee, Clayburne co. Henry Abercrombie, Christiana, Randolph Co.; Reuben Carter, Sarah C. Phillips, Delta, Clay Co. We greatly desire when you all meet at your camp meetings that the whole band of brethren and sisters offer a special prayer to God in our behalf. Oh how gladly we would assemble with you in such meetings. Be sure our weak petitions will be offered in your behalf.

M. C. Carley.

Stockville, Buncombe co., North Carolina.

L. H. Johnson, I have received your package of papers. The people are reading them with intense interest, both in the churches and out. All speak in the highest praise of your sentiments, and doctrines, except those who have more sectarian religion than christian holiness. And all see the great cesspool and slough of despond into which the human churches have been plunged by hypocrisy and wickedness. I could give you many instances if it was necessary, in which the grossest crimes and immorality have been committed by ministers and members, of the different denominations, and their black crimes hid and smuggled, and themselves and their crimes upheld and defended by the churches.

A preacher, no doubt a minister of God, attempted to expel from his church a number of bad members whose guilt was established beyond contradiction but the church rallied and forbade him; and he being outflanked and outnumbered by the devil's crew, fell back and fled from his charge.

If a moral and religious reformation is not effected soon, this whole country will be precipitated to one mass of chaotic ruin! The hypocrites in these churches have led in this great downfall. They are sure enough the children of hell. They claim that they are sanctified and cannot sin. They pray on prayers, and shout and proclaim their good deeds from the house tops, when they do no good deeds, and they scruple not at the same time, to commit the devil's meanest crimes, such as adultery, cheating and lying. One who is a great shouter at camp-meetings attempted to commit a diabolical outrage on the person of a young lady, spends his time mostly in lying, tattling and stirring strife in his community, went into open court and swore to a willful and malicious lie to save the reputation and shield from punishment a well known thief who was a member of the church. But I must stop, I could write a week. My God speed you on in the christian's despised way. You have some responding hearts here. All have not bowed the knee to Baal.

The above is from a brother whose business profession gives him extensive and accurate knowledge of the people. Ed.

Leas Level, March 25th, 1878. York co., Pennsylvania.

Dear Brother Johnson, I received your ever welcome little paper and was glad to hear from you. I will give you an extract from the Messenger, by Bishop Dubbs of Ohio. (Hoffer spoken of below, I knew personally to be a true minister of God, and not of men. Editor Stumbling-stone.)

Bishop Dubbs: "The so called Hofferism has done much mischief in York county and will doubtless prove the ruin and destruction of many souls. A man by the name of Hoffer, a pretended reformer, now dead, used to hold meetings in this part

of the country, he denounced every church as corrupt, rotten, fallen; in blasphemous words railed at the celebration of the sacraments of the Lord, railed against a paid ministry, support of missions etc. and thus carried away quite a number of weak minded superficial christians, who did not like to support according to their means. He understood how to operate upon some people to gain their favor. His real followers are not very numerous. But quite a number of people who are not established in divine truth have been demoralized. Of course under these circumstances it is in some places somewhat difficult to labor." This he wrote as a slur on humble christians.

We had a good revival here last winter. Brothers Irley, Wert, and Painter carried on the meeting. There were a good many seekers. Some I believe were soundly converted to God. May God bless and keep them faithful, in my prayer.

Zachariah Fry.

The above remarks of the Evangelical Bishop concerning Brother Hoffer and the other denigrators who have taken Christ alone, is a sample of the spirit of jealous carnal organizations every where and in all time. Souls delivered from the jaws of the sect wolf are of course considered lost. When the news of Bro. Hoffer's death came to a certain village, a woman professing sanctification marched around her door yard drumming on a tin pan for joy that he was dead! Such is sectarian sanctification toward God's true ministers. Ed. Stumbling-stone

Ithaca, N. Y., June 26th, 1878.

My dear Brother Johnson, one of your papers fell into my hands last evening. I find you are in search for some God's dear despised children. My heart gave an answer quick to your appeal. The Lord bless you, my brother. I stand alone here bearing a testimony to the truth. I have come out from the Great house; have gone forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach, I am despised and rejected of men as was our dear Lord when on this earth, and as all who follow Him will be. It is less than three months since I learned that all sects are an abomination in the sight of God, and took my place outside them. Perhaps nothing has caused such a commotion in the denomination which I was in (Methodist) as this. I have nearly always held official (so called) relations, and during the past six months have been State Agent for the New York State S. S. Association, occupying pulpits from three to seven times a week. It was during this trip among professing christians I was led to see the hollowness of the whole thing, and so take my present position. Quite a number here are in search of the truth, and I expect will take their place outside.

I appreciate the work you are engaged in, and wish much to aid you in it; but I am very poor, earning just enough to keep my family, by being prudent. I am asking our Father if He would please give me some money that I might use for His glory. If He sends me any I shall not forget you. If you have any back numbers, I would like a few copies to distribute. I bid you God speed in speaking the truth. Soon this turmoil will cease, and our dear Lord will come again to take us to Himself. God is gathering out his dear children from these systems of men. To Him be all praise—He only is worthy.

Yours in Him who has made us one,

A. F. Cowles.

Fairmount, Grant co., Indiana, May 18th, 1878.

Dear Brother Lyman Johnson, I have just received the

have had a desire for some time to visit you, and have a long talk with you in regard to the present condition of things pertaining to the church of God on earth. I am nearly thirty-one years old. My folks were Methodists and Friends. I became a member of the M. E. Church in 1866 and was a member with them about ten years, during which time I first taught school, and then entered the law; practised law about six years, and became fully convinced that I could not be a Christian and a lawyer both. So about two years ago, I gave up my business entirely, and under the conviction that I ought to give all my time to the work of the Lord, I have been thus employed since that time. I was licensed to preach, and about six months afterward, having seen so much sin in what they call the church, I asked for and received a letter from them, since then I have not felt that I could conscientiously belong to any human organization. I went to Lawrence, Kan., and found several there who mourn the sad condition of professors, but who, through prejudice of education, don't want to leave what they call the church, but they heard some plain talk from me. However the two most devoted christians there have left them. I am more and more convinced that the so called churches are doing great harm. I heard a Quaker preacher say lately that the church was the greatest enemy to the cause of Christ in the world. I believe that there is only one true church called "The Church of God." All its members are God's children, and that they are holy, and do not commit sins; that all God's children are His ministers, kings and priests. All should preach and exhort and work for the Lord any way He requires. I believe they are led by His spirit, and do His will and love nothing but Lord and man, walk in humility with God, and need not any outward form or ordinance, but are born again and made new creatures in Christ Jesus; are meek and lowly in heart; they walk in the light of Christ and hear His voice and know Him and are known of Him. There are many who are God's children, but whose education causes them to do and act as they would not if they had different knowledge. We are only required to be and do the best we know, and know the best we can. Obedience must keep pace with knowledge. We should have charity, but not indulge sin. I am engaged in the work every day; am greatly blessed; am satisfied with God's blessings to me. I have spent nearly all my means since I quit business. I am now a poor man in this world's goods, but hope the way may open for me to come to Toledo soon. The Lord supplies all my needs. I believe the time very near when God's children will see that they should come out of these human organizations, and meet daily to worship God and do His will. I pray for you.

Respectfully,

A. M. Roper.

Gibson Station, Creek Nation, Indian Territory, May 15.

My dearly beloved Brother in Christ, with all thine household and all that are in Christ Jesus everywhere. Amen.

Glory be to God forever for a knowledge of the whole truth of the glorious gospel of the Son of God. I am rejoiced and made joyful in my soul tonight by the receipt of the Stumbling-stone and your letter. O that I could be with you to meet face to face these who are contending for the "faith once delivered to the saints." O Brother, my heart is sick at beholding the corruption, ignorance and deception of this so-called Christian age and nation. O! what living death reigns everywhere—people called christians stagger-

ing at the promises and commandments of God. Consider our situation; only babes in Christ, and standing alone for Jesus in the midst of awful darkness of sin, unbelief and ignorance the blind leading the blind. There is none with whom we can meet to speak a word of comfort or instruction. My continual prayer to God is for Him to lead us into the presence of some of His dear children. Nevertheless, O my God, Thy will be done. God is with us, and that is more than all them that be against us.

I have had a wonderful experience, Brother, and most glorious to enjoy has been my experience in this Territory. Lost beyond all hope of recovery, sunk in despair—given up to do Satan's work of every description, and was doing it with all my powers, and then to be chosen of God a vessel of mercy. O, love beyond degree. Conquered by love, humiliated to the lowest extent, I fell upon the earth, kissed the ground in the absence of the feet of Jesus, and covered my head with dust. O, how I worked night and day being "led by the Spirit." My earthly dependencies (property, etc.) God has been steadily pulling out from under me and teaching me to trust in Him for everything.

O; how the world does hate Jesus and his genuine truth. What persecution it raises. We (myself and wife) have been cast out and condemned until God had to take us away from the entire community in which we lived when He called us. Glory to His name forever. What awful lies have been started, and we toiling all the time for the poor, sick and distressed of their own race. Brother, I am barefooted and coatless for the name of JESUS. Bless His name forever. "Love thy neighbor as thyself." O! what trimming down of self-crucifying dying to the world. "Escaped the corruption in the world through lust," killed and made alive forever. Amen.

Blessed be the Lord for the Stumbling-stone. It tore my eyes open never more to be shut. From a child I was impressed with the thought that I should give myself to God in a special manner. My first reading of the New Testament showed me that something was wrong and then came in the Stumbling-stone to settle the conviction. Praise the Lord I trust Him for every promise, and obey every commandment. Abraham's faith was to know no impossibilities with God. I strive to walk precisely in his footsteps, that righteousness may be imputed to me a sinner; and Paul says that I shall be. Notice this, Brother, and see if I am not right. "If therefore ye have not been faithful with the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (Jesus). Sell that ye have and give alms. Give to every man that asketh of thee, &c. Now that means the putting away of all our property before we can receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost with fire—to be endowed with POWER like the disciples on the day of Pentecost—thus rendering us able to face all manner of opposition and to be bold witnesses for Jesus everywhere. I have reached that point called the "Rest of faith" a complete submission of my will to God in everything. Thy will be done, but I lack power. Property all gone—unspotted from the world—spiritually minded—affection set on things in Heaven, &c. I stand where the disciples did when Jesus said, Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. O, my God, save us until the day of Pentecost. O, the power. I want more of God in my religion. Tell me anything that will help us on to that state when we shall be "Filled with the Spirit." As for the sects and false teachers I have seen everything clear from the first number of the Stumbling-stone that I received. It is all truth too true to deny.

The church, the body of Christ, the house of God, is one and all the self same thing. O, what delusion about churches, houses of God, etc. There is only one church, and it consists of every human being on God's footstool in whom His Spirit dwells. The same is also the house of God, the church of Christ, His body. O, what a unity. The building of all these meeting houses is unscriptural—better give the money to the poor in the name of Jesus. What house will ye build unto Me, saith the Lord. Brother, I could write all night. O, to see you. If you visit the West, let me know, for I must see you.

Brother, I cannot quit, I must write some more. I will send some money for the press as soon as I can get hold of some. I feel so much alone here without guides, whose faith we might follow. O, for the communion of the saints. No sound preaching. I never sit in the hearing of a sound sermon in my life. Never saw a man whom God sent to preach the gospel in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power. But thy will, O God, be done. Thou art able to hold me up anywhere. God has revealed to me and witnessed so many things, when I am reading or thinking on his word, or even talking about heavenly things. He often blesses me when the words are yet in my mouth. It makes me tremble to hear you refer to the coming of the great judge, for I know the wickedness of this generation; awful, awful wickedness that is being carried on in these last days spoken of by the Great Apostle. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves." Covetous, proud, blasphemers, etc., cannot endure sound doctrine, despisers of those that are good, having a form of godliness etc. O, that my head were waters, that I might weep over a fallen world. L. Hanson.

What makes a Sect?

Sectarians dodge the truth by accusing the faithful of being a sect. They call it sectarian to oppose sects. Mark this lie of Satan.

Separation from wickedness does not make a sect of God's church! Denouncing sects or any other sin does not divide the righteous! The faithful are not a sect, but are Christ's unbroken body! It is the devil only who calls them a sect, and it is the chief lie he ever told, and succeeds because of the division which does exist between them and all his hosts of sin, but which sin has caused.

If one is true to Christ he cannot divide his flock, nor make a sect of his church. A sect is made by taking a name, or an organization or ceremony or any thing besides righteousness or christian character, and making this a ground of any separation or distinction between God's children. If I make anything besides righteousness a ground of any separation whatever in church relations, or if I join or indorse such separation or sect, then I am a sectarian and guilty of cutting Christ's body in two more guilty than those who drove the nails and spear into his body, although God may have mercy on those who do it ignorantly, as he did on the original murderers of Jesus.

Second Coming of Christ.

DAINGEROUS TEACHERS, WRÉSTING SCRIPTURE.

Figurative Texts, Baptism, Death, Cross, etc.

That Jesus Christ is literally coming the second time to judge the world, and to punish the wicked, and reward the righteous, is a truth just as prominent and just as important as that he came the first time literally in the flesh, and was crucified and literally rose again. To deny one is just as fatal as to deny the other, because it makes the Bible a lie, and sets at naught its most conspicuous warning to a guilty world.

I am constrained by the Holy Spirit and a knowledge of the truth to sound the alarm to all pilgrims and to the ungodly also.

There are some sincere followers of Jesus who have been misled by false teachers and lying spirits, and have spiritualized away the meaning of a large portion of the New Testament, so that they pervert its plain meaning. I want to say first of all, that the Bible never perverts the ordinary use of language so as to mislead mankind respecting any duty or teaching whatever. The sense of words commonly used by men to convey ideas is never violated by Scripture so as to deceive or mislead. It is a lying spirit always that construes Scripture differently from the plain sense of its words honestly read.

There are parables and figures of speech in describing spiritual things often used, but just like any writings, the connection and other Scripture makes the meaning plain to every child of God. When a figure or parable is used it is manifest to any honest reader, just the same as when used by any other writers. God's children cannot mistake the literal for the spiritual, except when they are made dishonest by prejudice and false training. Carnal minds of course cannot understand spiritual things, yet no important teaching of the Bible can be misunderstood except by the wilfully blind and dishonest, who are unwilling to look at plain facts.

I will take some of the figurative texts. Jesus tells us to take his cross. We know it is not literal, because he says the flesh profiteth nothing, and the sense of all his teachings forbids it, and the rest of scripture makes it plainly mean simply a denial of the flesh, a death of heart to earthly things. And a literal cross was no where insisted on nor taken by the apostles. Just so in regard to the word death and life; the connection determines plainly whether literal or spiritual death and life is meant. The main controversy about figures has been on the outward rites of Judaism.

These were observed, the Passover, Baptism, circumcision, days, vows, and all Jewish ceremonies were kept by our Savior and Jewish believers after Pentecost.

But God's children have never differed about these rites being anything more than types and shadows, of no value without the substance, and that if we have the substance, which is Jesus Christ, that these can add nothing to him.

It is only the grossly carnal and false, ungenerate, that have ever attached saving importance to these rites, except as each conscience so regarded them. The apostles did not make any ceremony whatever a test of character; they did not preach outward rites, nor anything but Christ as essential to salvation, although as Jews, and for the sake of the weak, they did keep and teach Jews to observe all their rites, until they should come to the light, or Christ the substance of all types should come in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

But not so was their teaching of the first and second literal coming of Christ. Jesus was literally born in a manger, literally lived and died on the cross and rose again, and literally went up in a cloud to heaven. To deny this is to deny the honest meaning of all words and the testimony of all witnesses. And the scriptures teach that just as Jesus was resurrected so the dead shall be raised, and just as he went up, so he shall come again; and if the one was literal the other will be, or else the words are false and there was nothing literal whatever.

Jesus frequently spoke of his going away and coming again. If one was literal the other was literal. By parables and by plain words, and every way he taught and warned the people of his second coming. Parables of the vineyard, of the virgins and talents; descriptions of the judgment; declaring that the dead shall rise, the good to life, and the bad to damnation, etc., the gathering of the tares and wheat at the end of the world, such endless passages, all pointing to and describing what is to come, cannot be construed to mean a spiritual experience in this life, without falsifying all language and making the Bible a lie. That

Jesus does by the spirit come to all true believers is true indeed, and plainly taught; and that he dwells by the spirit in all the faithful. We cannot mistake all scripture which teaches this. But to confound with this, the literal coming, is the lie and delusion of the devil. The plain meaning of words is perverted and believed to make out this false teaching. If resurrection is a spiritual experience only, then how can they come forth from their graves to a resurrection of damnation? It is a palpable lie. As in Noah's time they were surprised with terror by a deluge, so says Jesus they will be by his second coming. If the deluge was literal, the other is literal and full of terror. This is not true of any spiritual coming. The ungodly mocked at Pentecost, and they have ever since at every spiritual coming, and have trembled only at the prospect of his literal coming to judge their guilty souls. There is no terror to the perversely wicked in any spiritual coming. Nor do men need the warning to be also ready, lest they be surprised by his sudden appearance, and the unprepared shall be filled with terror and remorse. It is trifling with words, making a mock of Scripture, to say that these terrible warnings of Jesus and apostles mean only spiritual outpourings, coming of the spirit, into men's hearts.

I have not time to notice many passages, but one is enough. Acts 1: 11. The angels who addressed the disciples after Jesus ascended and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven, this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." This is a plain matter of fact statement and declaration which admits no figure of speech. The ascension was literal, and the angels positively declare that just as literal will be his coming again. The apostles so understood it, and also all Christ's teachings, for in every epistle they exhort the people to be ready looking for his coming. They already had his spiritual coming and spiritual resurrection, yet Paul down to the end of his life was looking for a resurrection and coming of Christ. Just before his death; Paul says, 2 Tim. 4: "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 only that, but all them also that love his appearing."

We cannot mistake Paul's words. At the end of his long life of gospel work he is looking for his reward at THAT DAY, the last so often spoken of, from the Judge at HIS "APPEARING," what appearing but that every where spoken of? Paul had Christ formed within, the spiritual resurrection many years before. So likewise Peter and all apostles, had the same Holy Ghost imparting it to others and yet were looking, and so exhorted saints, for his appearing in almost every chapter. Jude says he shall come with ten thousand of his saints. Paul also repeatedly, "with flaming fire, to take vengeance" etc. So also 2 Pet. 3. And 1 John 2: 20 to 28 ver. says that the Father and Son abide with us, and "Now little children abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming." Here John teaches Jesus abiding in them and Jesus to come, both in the same text, hence like all Scripture, Christ the Holy Ghost abiding with us, and Christ the personal mediator, to come as literally as he went, in clouds and flaming fire! Peter declares he saw his coming as it will be, on the mount of transfiguration. 2 Pet. 1: 16-18. This cannot be misunderstood. O, we cannot without throwing aside the Bible fail to sound its oft repeated alarm that the burning day of God is at hand, and that the world is getting ripe for the awful harvest of vengeance; that Jesus is to come in terror to take possession of this rebel world, to execute justice long delayed, to punish the guilty, with a literal and everlasting punishment!

I warn against all religious teachers who deny either the future literal, or the present spiritual coming and indwelling power of Christ. Both are equally false and dishonest or blind readers of the Bible. Those who literalize or spiritualize Scripture contrary to its common sense use of words are not to be trusted as religious teachers.

Our Warfare.

It is not with carnal weapons or flesh and blood, but is as real, desperate and personal as men ever fought. Not a war on abstractions, and imaginary phantoms, but literal powers of wickedness in men who are opposed to God and righteousness.

The False Prophet, the false ministry and church, and their idolatrous hosts with Satan for leader is on one side; and the faithful few with Jesus for lead-

er is on the other side. Truth the sharp sword is our only weapon of assault, the Holy Spirit the power that makes it hurt. To kill with a sharp conviction is our intent. To make the false an abhorrent to themselves and all others by a view of their guilt that they may repent if there is hope, or that others may be saved from them, or what is the main end we effect, being true witnesses for Christ before a world and devils who hate him, which is the highest success and glory martyrs ever won. We may win no converts while we live, yet the faith that dares to tell and live the hated truth against the greatest odds of discouragement is the most brilliant success and heroism on earth, and does more to win souls to God than all the charm catching revivalists who win souls only to deceive them.

Our warfare is not a literary debate or play with words, or a sham fight, or civil disputation about difference of opinion. O No, this paper has nothing to do with differences of opinion. Our controversy is only that of truth and honesty with Lies, Treachery, Hypocrisy, and Guilt! It is a fight of Virtue with Corruption, Righteousness with Sin! There is not much chance for the courtesies of worldly debate here! We are indeed gentle and courteous to those who hate us for the truth, but not that false gentility that flatters the guilty, or for etiquette acts a lie to gain their praise and damn their souls! If for civility we admit a doubt favorable to our adversaries, we betray truth and virtue and go over to the devil. DOUBT IS DEFEAT in a moral controversy. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Our assault on idolatry, sectism, church corruption, false prophets and all sin has no IF nor PERHAPS in the vocabulary. We know, and our opponents know that we are true, and they are false. There is no chance for innocent doubt here! Ours is a fight of faith with unbelief. Our conviction of truth is our vital breath! To waver is to be lost! As confident that God is right and his throne will abide, are we that his word we preach will break our foes in pieces here, or else grind them to powder in eternity!

North Toledo Camp-Meeting.

North Toledo camp-meeting was held June 26 as appointed. It being a busy season, we did not see some whom we expected. But a number came from a distance, and a considerable number from the city and vicinity notwithstanding the efforts of certain sectarians to prejudice and keep people away. To the credit of the people of this place I can say that I never saw at a camp-meeting such uniform quietness, attention and good order as at this meeting, although we had no police nor regulations of this kind. Here where we live and are known sectarian lies have no power to stir up mob violence or disorder. The outward success of our meetings was greatly hindered by our not being able to meet evenings, because of the swarms of Mosquitoes from the marshes at this season. Yet we had many meetings profitable and blessed to pilgrims, and which had a good effect upon the people, opening the way for future efforts of a gospel which has no sect or selfish end in view.

Covetousness.

I have no confidence in the christian character of any man who will see a brother in Christ suffer for want of food, shelter, or land on which to live, while he has these blessings, nor who will see a minister of Jesus hindered, while he has means to help him. All such so called christians are sure of the hypocrite's doom. I speak only of the Lord's poor, and the Lord's ministers. To give to the helms and to those who will not work when they are able, is to give to the devil. But to withhold from the worthy in need, is to rob God, and to commit a sin as vile as murder, and of the same nature.

All who send for this paper without paying, will receive it free so long as the funds contributed by others is sufficient. The law constitutes these subscribers who consent to have others pay their subscription for them. So while we comply with the postal law strictly, the paper is virtually as free as ever. There is an effort made in violation of postal law and the just liberties of American citizens, to throw this paper out of the regular privileges of the mails. But there is a Mighty God against whom the low tricks of politicians and their ecclesiastical consorts cannot prevail.

TOUR EAST

I expect if it please God, to attend a camp-meeting in Pennsylvania, York co. in August and a grove meeting in New Jersey at Kingswood, Hunterdon co., Aug.

Also at the invitation of Bro. I. M. King will spend Sabbath Aug. at Brooklyn New York, thence to Mass. and to Binghamton, then to Ithaca, then to Wayne, Monroe, and Niagara counties, homeward. I would be glad to hear from brethren on this route before starting.

I cannot fix the dates, nor decide fully until I hear further from brethren.