

the footsteps of this King, I could not refrain from exclaiming, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Till I greet the reader again may he and I rest under the shadow of the Almighty.

A VISITOR.

WOODBERRY, MERRIWETHER Co., }
GEORGIA, Dec. 26, 1868. }

Elder Bodenhamer:—By request, I send the following private letter, written by J. B. Matthews, of Ark., to his sister in Georgia, which you can dispose of as you think proper:

DREW COUNTY, ARK., }
May 12th, 1868. }

Dear Sister:—I now commence a letter to you, agreeable to your request, giving some of my views on the union of Christ and the church—should I be able to do so.

Before we proceed, I will state that this doctrine seems to be veiled in mystery, to a considerable degree, though it has been considerably discussed of late years—and that to the dissatisfaction of some of the brethren. We should be careful to avoid extreme, lest we deify the church on the one hand, or separate it so far from Christ on the other as to sever the attracting cord, and thus lose it forever. There are many texts of scripture that appear to us to have some allusion to this subject, but most of them are spoken in a figure; hence the disagreement among the brethren. In Rom. 1st: 20th, we read, "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head." Then let us go to the creation and learn a lesson, for we find that in pointing out to man his food, that every tree yielding fruit, and having its seed in itself, was good; and that of all the trees of the garden, Adam had permission to eat, but of the tree of knowledge, &c. The tree of life, also, in the midst of the garden was not prohibited. Then it must have had its seed in itself; that was Christ in a figure. We read in Isa. 53rd: 10th, "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his day", &c. And in 1st Peter 1st: 23rd, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." Again let us go to the creation. We are told that in the image of God created

he him, male and female created he them. How was "them" in the plural, created in the image of God? but in representation of the Lord Jesus Christ and his bride the church, "male and female created he them." We see not Miss or Mrs. Eve, existing in Adam as such, but we see a "rib" which is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, which evidently had its beginning in the creation, with or in Adam. Now in Eph. 5th: 29th, we are told, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." 30th verse, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bone." 32nd verse, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."—Once more let us go to the creation for instruction. We behold two great lights, and we are told in Gen. 1st: 14th, that they are for signs, &c., and in the 16th verse we have these great lights distinguished from the lesser lights; the one to rule the day in which we have light and heat, with all its nourishing and cherishing effects on this cold earth, but by the rotation of the earth, it is excluded from our vision near one half of the time, and we are measurably deprived of its light and heat; the other to rule the night, in which we have a reflector which serves to dispel the very gloom of darkness, caused by the disappearance of the other, which is the very foundation of light and heat, that is so very essential to the inhabitants of this earth; but the other is an opaque body, and affords us no light in and of itself, but being so fixed in the firmament that it reflects the light of the other, and throws its rays on this earth, by which the density of that darkness that would otherwise exist is removed.

Can we not see here in a figure, the Lord Jesus Christ and his church; in him the very foundation and heat of life—that spiritual life that is given to his children who believe. He is the light of the world. The same attribute is also ascribed to the church, but has, as we found it to be with the moon, is a borrowed light, and as day and night are partner sharers of our time in this world, so the believers in Jesus are made to mourn much of their time, over a dark and beclouded mind, and consequently have to grovel much of their way; and then it is that we are prepared to realize the benefit of the light of the moon, the laws of the church.

We might go on in applying this figure to a considerable length, as there is much food here for thought, but space forbids. If we inquire when these two lights were made, we find them both to have been created the same day. The Psalmist in the 45th Psalm and 6th verse, says, "Thy throne O God is forever and ever," &c.; and in the 9th verse, "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." He tells us not when or how she got there, but she did stand there. In John 17th: 11th, Christ prays "Holy Father keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one."—21st verse, "That they may all be one as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us," &c. Read the whole chapter. But I must stop making quotations and only allude to them, as space would fail me. He is represented as the head, and the church the body; He is the husband and she the wife; He the creator and they the creatures; He is the elder brother and has the right to redeem; they the younger and need redemption. But no one figure is fully sufficient to represent this truth, else there would have been no use for but the one, nor does any figure, or all of them combined completely show forth this truth, or come up to the thing prefigured; for then it would be the thing itself. But the believer has not a clear view of these truths at all times, but only as God in his Spirit's power draws back the curtain or lifts the veil and gives us a little peep into the things that accompany salvation. So we can testify with the apostle, "that without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." The newly awakened soul is apt to conclude with the poet:

"Come saints and sinners, hear me tell
The wonders of Immanuel,
Who brought my soul with him to dwell,
To dwell in sweetest union.
He looked on me with pitying eye,
And said to me as he passed by,
With God you have no union," &c.

Such is his conclusion when realizing a sense of his lost and undone condition; he feels the effects of sin, and mourns over his misspent life. His corruptions permeate throughout the whole of his physical and moral system. I have sinned, I am lost and undone, I thought by reforming my course in life, he would approve of my conduct and have compassion on me, but I see now I was wrong. For I can now see sin, new sin mixing itself with

the very best of my performances, to sink me into perdition; though my former life had been faultless. I now feel that in me there is no principle to unite me to Christ.

"He looked on me with pitying eye,
And said to me, as he passed by,
With God you have no union."

Such is the feelings of the poor soul, when bowed down beneath a load of sin and guilt. But at a time, unexpected, when he is about to despair, the Lord Jesus is revealed to the soul, as a loving and kind Redeemer; one that long before the poor self-condemned sinner was born into the world, stepped in between him and the uplifted hand of justice, and received the stroke in his own person. He was bruised for our offences, by his stripes we are healed; a change now comes over him, he sees a principle of attraction in Jesus, his soul runs out after him, he can now adopt the language of the Spouse in the Songs and say, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely." Now let us climb the highest pinnacle in our state of delight, go if you please to the top of old Bunyan's delectable mountains, and there frequent the shepherds tents and where they watered their flocks at noon-tide and there take hold of their prospective glass, and if you can hold a steady hand, take a look through it; that glass will show you your origin, and the purpose for which you were created; you can also see how your own conception of what was your true state, was wrong, your judgment was perverted. You thought at one time by mending your life, you would please the Lord, at another time, you felt to be so completely alienated from God there could not possibly be any relation existing, no more than there is with light and darkness or heaven and hell. But you can now look back and see that you never got so low, but that his everlasting arm was underneath thee. "Blessed art thou Jeshurun, the eternal God is thy refuge, the everlasting arm is underneath;" or if you can stand with the Psalmist and behold the King in his glory, you will see that his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his throne is forever and ever, and on his right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir; or take your stand point with Paul and see that none ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven; or go with John in the spirit, to an exceeding high mountain,