

formed while fasting, as was the case of Barnabas and Saul, yet not inseparable. I would like to have your views and others upon this subject. I know christians have a principle in them to do the will of God if they can but know what that will is.

Yours in christian bonds,

JAMES J. DAVIS.

MACOMB, ILL., }
September 9, 1869.

Fragments.

(No. 1.)

Brother Bodenhamer:—How often do the Lord's children doubt their interest in the Lord Jesus! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written! How blind to the positive demonstrations given of the identity, power, glory and Godhead of Christ! I have in view the case of *Doubting Thomas*. How many such are found among the Lord's children even to-day. The tempter is ever ready to suggest something to the timid child of God to discourage him, and to throw him into doubts, either in reference to the character of Christ Jesus as a powerful and willing Saviour, to the truth of revelation, or to his own personal interest in Christ. Doubts of the latter are the most common and frequent disturbers of the peace and joy of the Lord's children. Few, even of the unregenerate in a christian land, doubt that Jesus was the Christ of prophecy, as an historical fact; and fewer still of the regenerate entertain any doubt that Jesus Christ was the Messiah looked for by all the prophets and holy men of old. Not many, perhaps, doubt the general truths of the Scriptures, but among the Lord's regenerate children many often doubt their personal interest experimentally in his atoning blood and justifying righteousness, and all of them have more or less of these doubts. Poor Thomas, however, could not believe that Jesus was risen from the dead, although the other disciples affirmed that they had seen him. Such an unreasonable assertion, such a strange statement was too much for the reason of the doubting disciple to comprehend or believe. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Poor doubting mortal! He had, doubtless, read in the prophets of the coming Mes-

siah. Angels had announced his birth; John the Baptist had borne witness to his character and office as the sacrificial Lamb of God; the Holy Ghost from heaven, and the voice of God had attested his Sonship, saying, "This is my beloved Son." Thomas had seen the Redeemer raise the dead to life, heal all manner of disease by only speaking the word, open the eyes of the blind, cast out devils, unstop the ears of the deaf and cause the tongue of the dumb to speak, and yet he is now found in doubt and unbelief in the report of his brethren, and, like the wicked Jews, required a sign—a further evidence of the startling report that Jesus was alive again.

Although he had been called out of darkness and from a state of death, and had become a believing disciple, had seen his mighty miracles among men and his God-like power over the storms and the seas, yet he had seen his Saviour crucified and buried, and now how can the statement be true, even by his brethren, that Jesus was alive! "I will not believe." He had forgotten that Jesus had told them all that He must be delivered into the hands of sinners and crucified, and that He should rise again the third day. How strange that Thomas and the other disciples should not have understood the Scriptures nor His own words, nor recognized the signs and wonders attending His death and resurrection! He had seen Jesus condemned to the cross; had witnessed the darkened sun while the demands of God's inflexible justice were being borne by his anointed Son; had felt the quaking of the ponderous globe, and seen the rending of the rocks, while His dying groans invaded the precincts of the dead and opened wide their graves.

He had doubtless felt the shock of earth when the angel descended and rolled the stone away, and lighted the earth with his presence. The mothers in Israel and the disciples had seen the empty tomb, and with their own eyes had seen their risen Lord and beheld the wounds of the nails and the spear. (John, 20:20.) They testify these things to Thomas, but the news is too good, too strange and startling for poor doubting Thomas to believe without both seeing and feeling for himself. But when he was brought into the presence of his

risen Lord and heard his voice it was enough. "My Lord and my God," was the quick response of his enraptured tongue. He could now say with Paul, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

Reader, have you ever found your own unbelieving heart, like that of Thomas's, slow to give credence to what your Redeemer has said to you and done for you? Do you often forget what sweet accents of pardon you once heard fall from his sacred lips? Have you often called in question the promises once applied to your sinking soul? If so, you are as faithless and unbelieving as he. Are you waiting to see your Redeemer with your natural eyes, and to thrust your hand into his wounds? "Oh thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt?" Did he not find you when lost in a waste howling wilderness, wounded by the wayside, and bind up your wounds, pouring in the wine of consolation? Did he not supply your present wants, and promise to see to all your future welfare through your pilgrimage?

"What more can he say than to you he hath said,

You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?"

Do you search his holy word often to find what he has said about you and to you, to see if you

"Can light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair."

Like doubting Thomas, the writer often calls in question his interest in the Redeemer's blood, but does not doubt its efficacy where applied. He often feels like a sinking Peter, but, thanks be to God, in his extremity he has, hitherto, found the Saviour near enough to reach out His hand and save. "Lord, increase our faith." Open our understanding that we may understand the Scriptures concerning thy Son our Saviour, our interest in his blood, and our duty to him and to one another, and to reach the hand of faith even to thy wounds.

I. N. VANMETER.

COAL BANK, Cooper Co., Mo., }
August 11th, 1869. }

Dear Brother Bodenhamer:—It has been on my mind for a long while to write a few lines for the brethren and sisters to read. Do not think hard of one that does not belong to the church for calling you brother, for if there ever was a dear people to me in this world, it is what they

call the Old "Ironside" Baptists.

I thought I would try to write a few of my travels, I cannot say from nature to grace, for that is too much for me to claim. I had a good father and mother, who I believe belonged to that chosen few. They talked to me a great deal about the goodness of God and the well-being of my soul.—This would often cause serious impressions on my mind, and I would make promises to do better time and again, and it seemed to me I did worse and worse. I always thought I would get religion after I was married, if there was any such thing as religion. I feel like I know that there is, for I think if there ever was a soul in this world that can witness feelings with those sweet experiences I can, when reading over the dear communications in Zion's Landmarks. When I got the first I could hardly help from shedding tears; it seemed it was the same blessed paper my dear old father used to get in North Carolina of brother Temple. I have a large book made of his papers now and I think a great deal of them; they were more consolation to my poor soul than anything else while the war was going on. My very dear friends, I can see and feel I was called to witness my sins when I was nothing you may say but a child. When about twelve years old I had a snake bite on my right hand. It was a very poisonous reptile, and my father and mother thought I would die, and I also thought so.—They sent for the best physician they could get, but they gave all hopes up, I would be very sure to die after all was done that could be. And as I thought I was about breathing out my last expiring breath, I asked my father where did he think I would go. Oh, was not that a hard question for a dying soul to ask a father? Knowing his child was wicked like other children, ought he to have told it he thought it would go to heaven? I think not. He made no answer to his fast dying child. The room was quite crowded, all mingling tears of grief with him. After I got well he said that was one of the hardest questions he ever had. And though I went on in sin, thinking when I got older I would get religion, for I had more than I could think on then, for I knew my soul was filled up with sin too much to attempt to try to mix with God's works. So I went on about three years more, when I had a spell of typhoid fever, and was