

R. N. O. Under

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Correspondence.

NEAR LEXINGTON,
OGLETHORPE COUNTY, GA.,
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Dear Brother Bodenhamer:—

Having to make a small remittance to you, I have concluded to write some thoughts in connection with the following words: "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4: 18. That there is a temporal religion or professed devotion to God, that is natural, and of which natural men and women are capable, none can deny, and all the things connected with it can be seen, or appears reasonable and right to natural men. Among these things is that of an equal chance of salvation for each and all of Adam's fallen race, to be obtained by works, or by the use of means, and to be missed entirely, if works and means are neglected. Then, according to this natural view, all that are lost would be without excuse, and God would have good and sufficient grounds to banish them forever, because he had given them a chance of heaven, and they had failed to improve it. If this was true, who cannot see that the salvation of sinners does not depend upon Jesus Christ, but upon sinners improving the chance given them; and if Jesus has done no more for sinners than to work out a chance for them to be saved, by something they have to do, then he has saved none, but has only made it possible for all to save themselves. It never could be said of them, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." But this last sentence is among the things that are spiritual and not seen. Again, it is a natural conclusion, that with the use of means (money enough) ministers can be employed and sent to heathen lands to preach, and through their preaching thousands can be saved, who otherwise would be eter-

nally lost. If this was so, who cannot see that the salvation of these sinners is by men and money, for with these they are saved, and without them they would be lost, notwithstanding all Jesus has done by his life, death, resurrection and intercession. All that would be of no avail to save sinners, but the use of the means has accomplished it. But, say some, (with whom I meet,) we do not attribute anything to the means used, we are only discharging our duty to God and to our fellow creatures, and attribute the whole of it to God. Very well, if it is a duty which God requires of you, it must be recorded in the New Testament, by precept or example, for surely that good book is the only rule of faith and practice for the saints, and if it is not there written, authorizing the means system, missionary boards and conventions, Sunday school unions, temperance societies, tract societies, begging money to pay preachers, you may employ and send into the field you have chosen for them to labor in; if you have authority in that good book for all such means, then it is your duty, otherwise you are treating the great Head of the church with contempt, taking his name, and then in that name, adding to the finished rule he has given, such a routine of means, and plans of human policy, professedly to advance his cause, when he has never asked nor required you to do any such things. And if the means accomplishes nothing in the salvation of sinners, why so industrious in their use. It may be with such, like it is with the priest, who says the money has nothing to do with getting souls out of purgatory, but that his prayers can avail nothing without it; and there is as good sense in saying they pray souls out of purgatory for money, as a means, as to say that souls are saved from hell, by the use of means, men, money, or anything else, apart from the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Among the temporal things that are seen necessary by natural minds, an educated min-

istry is desirable, and the natural conclusion is, that the most learned and eloquent ministers, are the most successful instruments, while others not so well educated and affluent, could not be as useful in the salvation of sinners; and if poor sinners are situated where they cannot hear the learned or unlearned preach, they must necessarily live and die in unbelief and be lost. If this was so, surely their preaching would appear in the place of Jesus Christ and his atonement, for with their preaching sinners would be saved, who without it would be lost, notwithstanding Jesus has shed his precious blood. One other thing which is temporal and can be seen, is that of advancing the cause of God with the treasures of this world, silver and gold connected with the wisdom of men, and with these excellent things employed improvement has been, and yet can be made, in the great work of saving sinners. If this was so, who could not see that it was not by the Spirit of God, but by the might and power of men and money. If the salvation of sinners depends upon the use of means controlled by mortals in the least degree, it no longer depends upon Jesus Christ; and though all professed ministers (who are not moved by proper motives) take the name of Jesus, to give them currency, whoever preaches that the salvation of sinners depends upon works, or means controlled by men, positively denies Jesus Christ, and of course have not the Father, and are of anti-Christ; and being of the world, the world heareth them, because they teach temporal things which can be seen, and are believed by natural men. 1 John, 4th chapter. A few of the things which are not seen and are eternal, and I will close. The means which God makes use of to accomplish his divine and unchanging purposes, are such as men would never think of, or if they did, would disdain. Joseph's brethren were used by the Lord, to have him sold down into Egypt, and that lying woman was

used to have Joseph cast into prison, to remain until God used the poor forgetful butler, whose dream Joseph had interpreted, to let the king know that Joseph the prisoner could interpret dreams. Just at the time God had designed, Joseph was brought out, and put in authority to provide for the coming famine, all for the best interest of Jacob his father, and his wicked brethren, never seen or thought of by them until Joseph made himself known to them. Just look at the whole circumstance and see how contrary to all human calculations.—God controlled the whole matter for their good, and for the display of his power and glory. Notice how God displayed his power, when the worshippers of Baal came in contact with Elijah the prophet, and also Ahab's prophets moved by a lying spirit, sent by himself, and Micahiah the true prophet. See how God controlled all to bring down that wicked king from the throne to his grave, to put in office a better man: David, and Goliath of Gath; Absalom, who wickedly got up a conspiracy to kill his father, and stole the hearts of the people of Israel, with his natural beauty, and by literally kissing their hands; all that could be seen, it was temporal, just like the external pretensions to love manifested by the advocates of the modern anti-christian institutions when they are trying to make proselytes; but poor Absalom was found hanging on an oak not quite dead, when Joab thrust him through with a dart; so will these also have their folly made manifest sooner or later. Daniel and the Hebrew children were delivered contrary to all human calculations, because God who is invisible and eternal, done it. The birth, life, extraordinary works of Jesus—his betrayal, death, resurrection and ascension—all contrary to human calculation, and out of the sight of the wise and prudent—and he displays his grace in calling and manifestly saving poor sinners in the same way, and leads them during their pilgrimage here in a way that their carnal nature cannot understand, and all this he does that no flesh should glory in his presence. Amen.

Yours in love,

D. W. PATMAN.