

CAMDEN, KERSHAW DIST., S. C., }
June 29th, 1870. }

Dear Brother Bodenhamer:—Being insisted on by brother W. B. Huckabee, I have consented to copy a letter which I sent to him several years since, and send it to you to dispose of as you think most for the glory of God and the peace and prosperity of Zion's kingdom.

I will give you a few of my scattering ideas on a passage of Scripture which you may find, Hosea 4th chapter 17th verse: Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

Manasseh and Ephraim were the two sons of Joseph, and when Joseph presented them to his sick father, Jacob called them to him, that he might give them his dying blessing; but Jacob crossed his hands, laying his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head, "guiding them wittingly." No doubt he was directed by the Spirit of God how to place his hands, and thus putting Ephraim before Manasseh, though Manasseh was the eldest son. Here is a special instance of God's love to Ephraim, for he conferred the greatest blessing on him, though he was the younger son.

Hosea prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Ahas and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in this chapter God gives him an extended view of the wickedness and punishment of Israel for their sins, and comes down to the 17th verse and says: Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

Jacob being the father of the twelve patriarchs, and blessing the two sons of Joseph cross handed, shows him to be a fair type of Jesus Christ, who was the head of his church, and called his twelve apostles and sent them out to preach the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of God, and blessed them with the power of his Spirit to do miracles, and warned them of many and great difficulties which they must pass through. And we often see in Scripture, that after the greatest trials and persecutions the apostles waxed bold and performed the greatest miracles. And how often is it that the children of God obtain their greatest blessings cross-handed. This being acknowledged, which we think no one will deny, the natural inference is, that Ephraim represents the child of God. Then the conclusion is that the children of God may be, and are joined to their idols, which causes so much darkness and distress. Says one: What are the

idols the children of God are joined to? Answer: The idols which the children of God worship now, are so numerous it is impossible to name them all here, but we believe unbelief is the great goddess and mother of all idols, for from unbelief all other idols rise. Pride, which is the predominant spirit of the day: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Popularity, or worldly honor: "They love the praise of men rather than the praise of God." Unscriptural gain or covetousness: Unscriptural gain is extortion and fraud, which is put in Scripture among the vilest abominations of human nature; "and covetousness is as the sin of witchcraft;" and "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Covetousness is idolatry, and every idolator, or even an enticer to idolatry, God commanded to be stoned to death. But we see this idol worshipped with impunity to a vast extent: Some will not preach unless they get great salaries; and others cannot, or rather will not, give their preacher one cent, no matter what his necessities and difficulties may be to serve them, or how well they may like him; the former "lording it over God's heritage," and proving by their own acts that they are "hirelings" and not true "shepherds," and the latter "muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn." Others occupying all their time, talents and powers in large cotton fields and short corn crops, and then complain more of the hard dealings of God, in time of a drought, when they see their hopes cut off, than any other person: all these spirits arise from "covetousness." I think it not strange that the heavy chastisement of God, both common and spiritual is laid upon us: "Love not the world, neither the things of the world, for he that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him." All the unscriptural institutions of the day are idols, and we believe every one of them are worshipped by God's children: but they "teach for doctrines the commandments of men," "and transgress the commandment of God through their tradition." Some may worship free agency, and others Baptist State Conventions, or a Theological institution, or the Sons of Temperance, and others their grog; some sprinkling children and others immersion, and some make a God of their belly. Everything that we take more delight in than we do in the love and service

of God is an idol, and almost every child of God worships one or another of them. "My brethren, these things ought not so to be." "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith," lest it be said to us "let him alone." If this be our condition, which we believe it is, no wonder we complain of darkness and distress. Awful sentence is denounced against us—"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." "Woe unto them when I depart from them." The backslider in heart "shall be filled with his own ways." Then let us return to our God, in full purpose of heart and full assurance of faith, "for God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation make a way for your escape." And I will call every child of God to prove the truth of the last quotation; for if the temptation is accepted and the transgression committed, his guilty conscience lashes him so severely he flies for his very life to the outstretched arms of bleeding mercy, and obtains pardon and escapes the condemning power of the law of God through the merits of Jesus. Jesus says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And when "the backslider in heart is filled with his own ways," he may be heard bemoaning himself, as Ephraim, thus, Jeremiah 31, 18th verse: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. 19th verse: Surely after I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh? I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. 20th verse: Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him; I will surely have mercy upon him; saith the Lord. We notice that Jeremiah prophesied in the days of Josiah son of Amon, and Jehoikim son of Josiah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah; and this part of his prophecy was six hundred and six years before Christ, according to beet calculation, while the prophecy of Hosea was seven hundred and eighty years before Christ, showing a space

of one hundred and seventy-four years; truly a long time to be in a backslidden condition. Says one: You take Ephraim as a child of God; I admit he was, but he fell from grace, and if he had died in this one hundred and seventy four years he would have been lost. Poor blind soul, have you never read, "I am God, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." And Jesus says, "Because I live ye shall live also;" "As thou hast loved me so have I loved them, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." We are changeable creatures, only from evil to evil; He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, without variation or shadow of turning. He says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness I have drawn thee." Again, "He that is born of God sinneth not, because his seed abideth in him, therefore he cannot sin because he is born of God." And David says, "Blessed is the man whose sin is pardoned, whose iniquity is covered, to whom the Lord will not impute sin." When Jesus is formed in the soul the hope of glory, God will not impute sin to that soul, for they twain have become one. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Read Romans 8th, 33d verse to the end of chapter. There is no state of sinless perfection. St. John says, "He that sayeth he liveth and sinneth not, deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him;" "For there is no man that liveth and sinneth not." "He that is born of God sinneth not." The soul is born of God, therefore it cannot sin to eternal condemnation, because Jesus Christ is formed in it the hope of glory, and his seed abideth in him. The flesh is not born of God, but is the same workshop for the devil that it ever was, only as it is kept in subjection by the restraining grace of God, and our own feeble efforts. Paul says, "With the law of my mind I serve the law of God, but with my members the law of sin." "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

We notice Ephraim gives all the honor and glory to God, to whom it