

THE
EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE
OF
ELDER DAVID BARTLEY,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

**This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for
a witness unto all nations. - Jesus**

Frank H. Smith, Printer, Indianapolis.

1896

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Tom Adams

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	4
CHAPTER I.....	5
EARLY IMPRESSIONS.....	5
CHAPTER II.....	8
FOUND GUILTY.....	8
CHAPTER III.....	11
TEMPTATIONS.....	11
CHAPTER IV.....	13
“THE MORNING COMETH.”	13
CHAPTER V.....	15
SAVED!.....	15
CHAPTER VI.....	18
ADDED TO THE CHURCH.....	18
CHAPTER VII.....	20
WHAT IS MY DUTY?.....	20
CHAPTER VIII.....	24
ORDAINED.....	24
CHAPTER IX.....	27
FLEEING, JONAH-LIKE.....	27
CHAPTER X.....	31
DELIVERED.....	31

INTRODUCTION

THE GENTLE READER may want to know the motive and aim of the author in offering this humble tribute to the brotherhood; therefore I may briefly say, the motive is neither ambitious nor selfish, but to glorify God; and the aim is, to both admonish and encourage His dear and loving children, especially the young soldiers of the Cross.

I have been moved to write this outline of my early life in testimony of the righteousness, mercifulness and faithfulness of God. His long suffering and goodness both in Providence and Grace, in His hand-dealings with me, will be plainly seen by the spiritual and observant reader.

Above all, the events herein narrated clearly show that THERE IS A GOD – the true and living God, they also show that, “If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself.”

We may go astray and wander far out of the way, yet never beyond the limit and power of the Most High. “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.” Truly did I find it so in my lost estate, and in my wanderings from the footsteps of the good Shepherd; for He went after me, and brought me back to His fold.

The young minister of the Gospel, who may be tempted to flee from the cross, should learn from my painful afflictions and merited chastisements, that “to obey is better than sacrifice,” and in keeping the Lord’s loving commandments there is a blessed reward of comfort and peace and rest to the soul.

Finally, I desire to leave behind me this ebenezer of praise to the precious Savior and loving Master, as a testimony to my dear family and brethren all, that He is abundantly able and willing and faithful to save them to the uttermost – even from sin and death and the lowest hell – that come unto God by Him; yea, that the Lord Jesus, the faithful and almighty Shepherd, will never suffer one of His little ones to perish, but will in the end bring us all off more than conquerors over the last enemy, and raise us up to His blessed and holy Heaven.

DAVID BARTLEY

Crawfordsville, Ind., September, 1896.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS.

This is the forty-second return of my spiritual birthday, which gracious and blessed event was on the 25th of April, 1854; therefore, my mind is moved to begin a relation of my early religious life on this memorable anniversary of the happy day when my spirit first rejoiced in God my Savior, who then reconciled me to Himself in Jesus Christ, His beloved Son and my loving Redeemer.

The next day was my twenty-seventh natural birthday. Both events were in the state of Ohio, and near the beautiful Ohio River.

My beloved parents were Elder John P. and Charity Bartley, and I was their ninth child and sixth son, born unto them the 26th of April, 1827, in their farm-home, about eighty miles above the city of Cincinnati. My father was then, and until his departure, a highly esteemed Primitive Baptist Elder or minister, and my amiable mother a faithful member. When I was about three years old my parents moved, with their large family of children, to their new farm-home in central Indiana, where I grew up to man-hood.

My beloved mother, so much like her name (Charity), was taken home to her Father in heaven, after a lingering illness of six months, when I was a little lad. In her sickness I was her daily waiting-boy, as I was too small to work on the farm; and I remember how kind and gentle, affectionate and patient she was in it all.

In my early boyhood days my budding mind was often seriously impressed with thoughts of my future destiny, of God and eternity; and I was wont to look up into the starry heavens with wonder and awe; for even then I felt that I was a stranger, in a strange and mysterious world.

One harvest time, at about the age of ten, I fell very sick, and seemed to be gliding down a steep and black mountain, with nothing beneath my feet but moving gravel, carrying me slowly down – down into a yawning abyss as black as night. This would startle and alarm me, for I feared it was an omen of my death, and that I must sink down into the bottomless pit. But as I grew on in years, I regarded death as far in the distance, and flattered myself that I should prepare to meet it and make my peace with God when I grew up and had enjoyed the pleasures of life. My idea was that I was quite a good, moral boy, having a good heart, and only a few outward sins, of small moment, which I could and should leave off before I came up with death, and then God would be pleased with me. As time went on I became somewhat religious – yet let no one else know it. With some small exceptions, I really thought that I was pleasing God. Being subject to occasional headaches, I thought it was a punishment for some little wrong; therefore, I would

silently ask Him to let me know when I displeased Him by causing me to have a headache as a warning to me, so that I might do right.

Father taught us children to read the Bible of Sundays and nights, and he would read with us, when not away preaching. It was his wont, too, to read a chapter to the family and pray before retiring for the night. On those occasions he would talk reverently to us of God our Maker, of our accountability to Him, and of judgment. This deeply impressed my young mind, and imbued me with a feeling of awe and reverence for the Creator – a feeling of fear and dread, I may say, rather than of love. In this way, too, I became somewhat familiar with the letter of the Scriptures, for which I have ever felt grateful. I regarded my father as the best man on earth and I also had a reverential regard for his fellow-preachers, who often visited our home, and many of them preached there. I believed then, as now, that they were the servants of the Lord. Moreover, from my Scripture reading, as well as from hearing their conversation and preaching. I fully believed (as I thought) the doctrine they held, as to the way of salvation – that it is of the Lord and by His grace.

In my early youth my eldest brother, Mordecai, left the parental roof and settled in Jasper county, Illinois, and after some time he came near dying with typhus fever, but was raised up to health again. He then wrote our father a long letter, giving his deep religious experience and telling of the sweet forgiveness of his sins and the peace and joy of his heart, at a time when his young wife and others were weeping around his bed, and thought he was dying – telling, too, that he was then so happy in the Lord that he longed to depart and be with his blessed Savior.

In this letter he said to father: “Tell Carleton and Sophia Universalism may do to live by, but it will not do to die by.” (They were our eldest sister and her husband, Mr. Carleton Avery.) After receiving this letter dear father called all the family in at night and read it aloud with deep and joyful emotion, for we had all sorrowfully expected to hear of Mordecai’s death.

After retiring that night I could not sleep for some time, for I knew that the Lord had saved and blessed dear Mordecai; but I knew just as well that I had no Christian experience, and that the Lord only could make me a Christian. O, how I wished I were saved, like Mordecai! But, alas! I then felt that I was only a natural boy.

Let me here speak of my sainted sister. With father and mother, she was a member of the dear old home church – Conn’s Creek; also her husband. But he and his father’s family had been carried off by the Universalists; and, after long persuasion, my sister also went with them. Still, she and her husband would attend father’s meetings, and then go home with him. Mr. Avery was a quiet man; but she became a zealous advocate of Universalism, and this had gone on a few years, until father was so tired with her that he seldom visited their home, wishing to avoid any further controversy with her.

As was usual, they were both at our house at the Baptist meeting time, with quite a company of Baptists. On Sunday morning all were having a good religious conversation in the large sitting-room. The boy David was in the rear listening, and near me were Carleton and Sophia. She was turning the pages of Wilson Thompson's hymn book, and her anxiety to talk attracted my attention. As soon as there was a pause in the conversation she spoke to father, who sat near, and read to him a verse on free grace. She then said: "Free, indeed! If it was free, it would be for everybody." For some minutes she went on with her argument, but no one replied, and she ceased. Then father, his voice tremulous with deep feeling, said: "Sophia, we all used to believe you was a subject of grace. I remember how you told your experience to the church, and I baptized you, and how you used to encourage me to go on and preach the doctrine of grace, even stronger than I did, telling me that it was the truth. But now, you have opposed it so long, I have become discouraged, and fear that we were all deceived in you, Sophia, and that you are a stranger to grace. You know that I have almost quit going to your house, for I have been so tried with your opposition and contention that I have resolved to talk with you no more on the subject."

All were astonished at the touching effect of this, for she began and penitently said to father that she could not harden her heart and hold out against the truth any longer; for she loved them all as the Lord's people, envied them their happiness and wanted them to forgive her if they could. She said: "You know, papa, that I have gone to the meetings of the church all along, and have come home with you, for I could not resist the desire to go. And I have often told Mr. Avery that there is more love among the Old Baptists than any other people. It touches my heart to hear old father Jones there say: „My dear brethren.“ I have tried to believe Universalism, but I can't hold out any longer."

She was calm and tender while she made this good confession, but father and his dear brethren were in tears of joy. Although I was nothing more than a natural boy then, yet I shall never forget that very pathetic and touching scene. Mr. Avery sat mute and with a downcast look. He never returned to the church.

The church gladly restored my sister to fellowship, and she never again wavered in her faith, but was ever after a true and faithful member, until the God of all grace called her to the church on high, where I trust to see her again and with her wear the crown of life, which the Lord will give unto all that love Him.

CHAPTER II.

FOUND GUILTY.

The second Sunday of November, 1844, was the seldom day of my awakening and conviction. As was my custom, I had gone to the old church. The old hewed-log meeting house stood on an eminence near the present town of Saint Paul. I had walked there with a light heart, and life was very bright and inviting to my view. While I respected religious worship, my motive in going was to see my young friends and pass away the day pleasantly.

Sitting there along in the front and middle tier of seats I was an indifferent listener to my father's sermon until near the close, when he quoted the words of Jesus: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." Father said that that stone was Christ, and the sinner that fell upon Him was broken-hearted and broken off from the law; but if we were not built on Christ we were yet in our sins and enemies to God. A silent voice echoed the words in my inmost being: "You are not built upon Christ; you are yet in your sins and an enemy to God." As by the vivid flash of the consuming lightning, I saw and felt and knew this awful truth, and wondered how I had been so blind that I had not seen it before. My sinful and guilty soul was fearfully exposed to my own view, and, as I thought, to the view of my father and all in the house. I sat there woefully smitten and blasted under the wrath of the just and holy law of God. My head sank upon my chest and the tears unbidden fell fast from my eyes. I wanted to arise and leave the house, but could not. My condemnation and the anguish of my spirit were fearful. I thought of the wicked company in the camp of the Israelites whom the earth swallowed up, and feared that I should thus sink down into perdition in the sight of all the congregation; for I felt that God was about to cut me off in my sins and that His just, vengeance was burning against me. But He has never been better than my fears.

The meeting ended and I went out with the rest, but could not raise my head nor speak to any one. As I stood there alone Miss Charlotte Avery laughingly said to a group of young friends: "Just look at David! I do believe he is trying to be religious." Many years afterward she told me that she remembered that event, and how she regretted speaking in jest.

That night I sought the woods, and for the first time in my young life knelt down in prayer, and with many tears implored God to have mercy upon me and pardon my sins. This was only the beginning of soul-trouble and sorrow; for many weeks and months slowly passed, until year after year was numbered, yet I was not pardoned and saved.

Not many days after the Lord thus opened my blind eyes I tried to persuade myself that it was all the work of Satan, and not the works of the Lord. Thus did I reason: "I am quite young and have not been a bad boy; therefore, why should I feel so deeply troubled and miserable? I will

banish these gloomy forebodings, be cheerful and light-hearted, as before, and enjoy myself with my young associates again.” For I thought that if this was the Lord’s work of conversion, I should be made to feel better and that I was getting good instead of so wretched and bad. But I found it impossible for me to be as before that solemn Sunday; for I would forget my surroundings and my work, and would be aroused and startled by the involuntary outcry of my suffering heart: “Oh, my sins! my cruel sins!”

Finding that it was impossible for me to be mirthful and happy again, or to escape from my heavy burden of sin and guilt, I then besought the Lord more earnestly in prayer, going off to myself at every opportunity, both day and night, to pour out my sorrowful complaints in His ears, weepingly confess my sins, and implore His forgiveness and mercy. Yet all my efforts brought no relief. As time thus went mournfully on, and God seemed not to hear me nor answer my heart-breaking cries for mercy, it occurred to me, when in the woods and on my knees, that I had not abased myself sufficiently before Him, and that if I would prostrate my body upon the earth He might hear my prayer and forgive my sins. Then I cast myself on the leaves, wept and prayed in the bitter anguish of my soul, but this gave me no relief. I could not see that in all my efforts I was still trusting in something that I must do, and expecting the God of salvation to reward me for it. How ignorant I was of grace! At times there would be some abatement of my deep trouble and mourning for a season, but only to return, and then I would feel worse, because I had been careless about my lost condition.

My father took the Signs of the Times, in which I often read of others finding pardon and peace, after a short time of sorrow and mourning, and this led me to think there was no forgiveness for me, or God would have heard my cries. Still, I could not help going off alone to weep, lament and pray, for this was the only way that I could give vent to the oppressive burden and sorrow of my heart. Sometimes I would take the Testament with me in the lonely woods on Sundays, and in deep sympathy sit and read the life of the innocent Son of God, and weep over His cruel persecutions and death, and I wondered why it should have been so.

At last it was awfully certain to me that I was hopeless lost forever, and was a reprobate, for whom there was no salvation. So terrible was this conviction I would wander away to myself, walk to and fro, writing my hands and lament aloud under the anguish of despair, fearing reason would forsake me. It seemed to me that my time was short, and then to endless woe I must go. I would piteously plead with God to grant me a place there away from the wicked, where I should not hear His holy name blasphemed. For O, I was sick of sin, and loathed it and myself! I wished that I had never been born, or had died in infancy. But all my regrets were unavailing, and it was impossible for me to escape from myself, or change my state.

I wish to go back to the autumn of 1846 and speak of a dangerous attack of a malignant fever, which came near carrying me off. The terror of my mind was so intense that I could not conceal it, and my father noticed it and kindly chided me, saying: “David, if you have to die, meet death with fortitude.” This only added to my alarm and dismay, for it convinced me that father

despaired of my recovery; and to die unprepared, sinful, guilty and condemned as I was, overwhelmed my soul in horror, and I could have no fortitude to meet a doom so appalling, for the black despair of my soul was unutterable, and piteous my terror. Yet I could not bear the thought of telling my father or any one of the awful state I was in; for it seemed too horrible for any one to know of it.

One evening, during my convalescence, my older brother John and my step-sister Jane sat in the open door of my room and sang:

“Awaked by Sinai’s awful sound,
My soul in guilt and thrall I found,” etc.

This hymn seemed to seal my awful state, and I most keenly felt the fearful truth of the last lines of each stanza:

“The sinner must be born again,
Or sink to endless woe.”

My soul shuddered at these solemn words, for I well knew that I was not born again, but my brother and sister knew nothing of the torture they innocently inflicted upon me.

My dear brother John peacefully departed in the triumphantly faith of Jesus years ago. It was my sadly sweet privilege to preach on the occasion of his funeral, by his request. Before he fell asleep in Jesus, the resurrection and the life, he told our brother Joseph of his abiding faith and hope in the precious Christ, and that he was peacefully reconciled and willing to depart, only he regretted that his feeling of great unworthiness had hindered him from following his Lord and Master in gospel baptism, which he had long desired to do.

CHAPTER III.

TEMPTATIONS.

Now I went forth into life again, but worse than before – alas! Into a living torment, worse than death. True, I had ceased to weep and mourn and pray, but so far from being filled with love and peace and praise, my heart was hardened, my life was more bitter than death, and my lips would utter vile curses, for which I would immediately loathe myself.

The former years of deep mourning, heart-penitence and tearful supplications were blessed, when measured by the following months and years of horrible temptations and hardened despair. For now I was doubly sure God had cast me off forever, and that I was a Satan-abandoned reprobate, or given over to him to be tormented, “having no hope, and without God in the world.” This was fearful.

Never before had I used profane words, but would have been shocked at the thought of profanity, but now the most horrid curses were darted through my mind, and when vexed, they would break out in words, in spite of my efforts to prevent it, and this caused me to hate myself and my wretched life. Oh! how could I be otherwise than most hateful in the sight of Him who is infinitely holy?

In the time of my mourning over my lost condition I had tried to solace myself with the fact that I had lived a moral life, but now I realized that my very nature was a fountain of iniquity, and this overwhelmed me in the deepest self-abhorrence. For I was made to understand that, by lineal descent from the corrupted head of the human race, there had come down to me a corrupt existence, as a poisoned fountain, so that in every fiber of my being I was vile.

Now all this so embittered my blighted life that I felt it would be better to die, because I was only adding sin to sin and making my deplorable case worse and worse; and my idea was that I should sin no more after being released from mortality; therefore, I was fearfully tempted to seek death. Indeed, on one occasion Satan drove me to the verge of self-destruction. I was plowing in a field of corn, and, becoming fretted at the horse, cursed it bitterly, and then the anguish of my spirit seemed unendurable. So, leaving the field, I entered a grove in a state of distraction, wanting to seek relief in some way; and there I verily felt the presence of Satan at my right hand, and that I was in his hateful power. I piteously asked him to release me from his horrid grasp, and audibly said: “Oh! have you not tormented me long enough?” I shudder to relate that the next moment I was impelled to cast myself on the ground, place the point of my dark-knife over my heart, with my right hand on the handle, and the thought ran through my mind: “How quick I could end this miserable existence.” But at that moment my hand became passive and powerless, as if arrested, and I said: “I cannot now, but I will soon.” Never again

was I so fearfully tempted. The Lord would suffer the tempter to go no further, but made a way for my escape.

As in the time of my mourning I sought to hide my troubles from those about me, so now I could not bear the thought of any one knowing what a profane and miserable reprobate I was; therefore, only when alone would I utter the tormenting thoughts of vile profanity which were darted through my tortured mind. So I was greatly mortified on learning from my wife that she had been shocked by overhearing me once. Yet I knew the Omniscient One saw me as I was.

At this time my father preached in the settlement every alternate Sunday, and I usually attended. But I have a vivid remembrance of only one sermon. It was upon God's election and predestination of His people unto holiness and divine sonship. I felt within me a spirit of bitter irreconciliation and anger against this doctrine, and mentally saying, "I cannot and will not hear it," I left the house; for I felt that it was against me and cut me off. My intention was to go home, but while still within hearing of my father's voice my angry spirit gave way, a strong desire to return filled my heart. I halted and listened; I stood irresolute and trembling, but soon felt subdued, and contritely walked back in the house and heard the close of the sermon.

From that time I felt this opposition and hatred to God's righteous will no more; for I knew that He was infinitely wise and holy. But this rebellion in my heart at that time prepared me to ever after bear with and pity those who may feel as I then did, rather than condemn them; for, as Jesus said on the cross, "They know not what they do." By nature we were all the children of wrath, and God only can reconcile the poor, rebellious sinner to Himself, and give him the spirit of peace and a heart to love Him, Jesus alone can say to the angry waves: "Peace, be still."

At last those horrid and fiery temptations were taken away from me at times, and then my hard heart would become tender under a feeling sense of the goodness of God, and my despairing and bitter spirit would be filled with sweet contrition. At such times my soul began again to cry out to God in prayer, and tears once more came to my relief. This was as the breaking of day to my darkened, chilled and famishing soul, after a long and fearful night in a horrible wilderness. O, the day-dawn and the day-star did indeed begin to arise in my hopeless heart! But, like the murmuring children of Israel, I wandered back and forth in the great and terrible wilderness a long time, until my soul was deeply humbled and shown that there was no goodness in me, before the merciful God of salvation delivered me out of the hand of my fierce tormentor, and brought me out of black despair into the light of His sweet and soul-cheering countenance. I can most truly say that my soul longed for His mercy, and I was led to feel that His favor was better than life. Therefore, with my whole heart I again sought the Lord in earnest, fervent supplication and prayer.

CHAPTER IV.

“THE MORNING COMETH.”

At times, when riding alone over the beautiful, wild prairies of Illinois, and beholding the wonderful works of God, as evidences of His Being and power and goodness, my adoring spirit would implore Him aloud to be pleased to mercifully deliver me from the fowler's snare, from the power of the devil, and from the chains of darkness and bonds of sin and guilt, and give me a heart to love Him; that I might spend the rest of my time in His service and the service of His people. And, blessed be His holy name! the Lord out of His holy heaven heard my plaintive cries, pitied my forlorn state, my anguish and groans, rebuked my fierce accuser, and mercifully gave me freedom and rest from my long captivity and bitter temptations.

Yet, for a long time after this, I knew nothing of the way of life and salvation, for I was as ignorant and helpless as an infant, and, indeed, very much like a passive child, conscious only that it exists. The years of my mourning and the time of my captivity to Satan had passed away, still I was not saved, and had no evidence that God loved me. It is true that I now had a feeling sense of His goodness to me as His unworthy creature, but that I either was or ever should be His child seemed impossible; for while He was infinitely holy, my past terrible experience had convinced me that I was woefully destitute of the least bit of righteousness or goodness. I felt the truth of the Scripture that says, “without holiness no man can see the Lord,” therefore I could not hope to ever dwell in His holy presence. The time had been when I vainly hoped to become better by repentance and prayer and ceasing from sin, but all this had fearfully failed me and I had now ceased from my own works, yet was utterly empty, destitute and poor. This I knew and felt. How, then, could I hope to ever dwell with God in holy heaven? Although this was the all-absorbing desire of my heart and dearer than life, yet it seemed impossible to me.

At this time the awful sense and weight of sin and guilt and the fear of torment were gone from me, it is true, although I knew not when or why or how, and instead a spirit and feeling of quiet submission to the will of God filled my heart. If saved, I knew not how; if lost, I felt that it was just. Although I had no hope, yet I was not in the black despair of the fearful past. I may truly say, I wanted to sin more. My sincere desire was to please and serve God, but I knew not how to do this; neither had I any power. All was mysterious to me, and even myself was a mystery.

With earnest wish to honor God and be useful to my fellow-creatures while I lived, I was led to engage in the study of medicine, and had finally entered a medical college in Cincinnati. While there I wrote a letter to my widowed sister Sophia, relating to her some of my religious exercises and troubles. She read my letter to her pastor, Elder McQueary of the Conn's Creek church, and each of them wrote to me. On our way to the college Tuesday morning, April 25, 1854, I and my room-mates called at the post-office and these letters were received. I felt that I must return to my room and read them alone, and sent in my excuse to the faculty by the others.

The letters revived all my past experience and were read with many tears. Elder McQueary advised and exhorted me in a fatherly way to come home to the church, do my duty and let it have my usefulness. He said that I was trying to place my mind and studies upon a vocation that the Lord had not intended me for, but He had another work for me. This came as a prophecy to me, and it deeply affected me; for I was ardently devoted to the healing art, and could not bear the thought of giving it up. I wept and prayed over these things until noon. The students urged me to return with them after dinner, but I again sent in my excuse, for I felt that I must be alone and commune with God. So I turned to the Bible for guidance and help; then knelt in earnest and tearful prayer to Him, beseeching Him to teach me His will. I felt to be passive in His arms, and was willing to be anything or nothing, just as He would have me. There was nothing else I so desired as that I might be saved, and then be in the church with the Lord's blessed people. Long had I believed that He had a saved people and church in the world; but alas! I also felt that I was far, far away from them, as one alone on earth – an outcast.

So, after much heart-searching, I felt that it was impossible for me to go to the church and ask it to receive and baptize me. Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This shut me out, because I was not a believer in the Lord Jesus; for I was as ignorant of the way of salvation through Him as the benighted heathen, and did not understand how I could be saved. Therefore, along in the afternoon, I took up a pen to write to elder McQueary to tell him that I could not comply with his kind request, and why I could not, although it would be to me the most blessed and happy privilege if I were entitled to it; but I had learned from the blessed Bible that believers in Jesus only had the divine right to this sacred ordinance and membership in the gospel church, and that it was not given me to believe in Him.

CHAPTER V.

SAVED!

O, how shall I fully set forth the wonderful revelation that the loving Father was pleased to give me just then? For when I was about to write that I could not go to the church because I was not a believer, that moment I did believe! Yea, Jesus was revealed to me, the Lord, my righteousness! and with the eyes of my understanding I beheld Him in His holiness and exaltation as my altogether lovely Savior! Sweet peace then filled my entire being and my heart went out in love to God, my adored Father in heaven! O, it was so unlooked for, and so wondrous strange and new and heavenly! God, in Christ, had reconciled me to Himself, and my peace was perfect. Unto me the Sun of righteousness had risen with healing in His wings of life and light, and the long night of darkness was past. His perfect love had cast out all fear.

The chief One among ten thousand was my Beloved, and He had loved me and owned me as His. How blessed! Jesus had died on the cross for me, and now He lived in me and I in Him. The salvation that was of Him was complete and glorious. My loving heart at once went out to His brethren, the dear children of God, and the church that Christ loved and gave Himself for. And so I soon went on with my letter and told my now dear Brother McQueary of this divinely-given faith in Jesus, and that in Him I was justified and saved, for He had covered me with the robe of righteousness and clothed me with the garments of salvation. So, I told him that I was now more than willing to comply with his kind appeal to come home to the church, and would be at their May meeting, if it was the will of the Lord. Then I also wrote to my sister and wife of my sweet peace and joy in the Lord, who had saved me from the horrible pit of everlasting destruction. I now felt as a little child in my Father's kingdom, and that it would be my delight to do His righteous will. To Elder McQueary I said, "I am humble enough and willing to be anything or nothing, just as God will."

The ensuing Thursday night, as we were all silently occupied with our class work, Dr. Bland (a student) came in with an old man, and to my glad surprise Elder McQueary stood before me! It had been years since I had seen him – and, O, what years they had been to me! He was on his way to a church some miles from the city, and had sought me out. The next morning we found the business place of Brother Howell, and in the evening we rode out home with him to attend the meetings on Saturday and Sunday. As Elder McQueary had not received my letter, I told him of my happy faith in Jesus, and he rejoiced with me.

This was the first time I had been in the country since spring had adorned nature in beauty and loveliness, and when I walked out the next morning at sunrise it seemed that I was in a bright, new world of charming beauty and praise, and my spirit was in a transport of delight and love. Under the preaching that day and the next my faith in the Lord Jesus was made to abound, and

‘my heart was full of comfort, for it was the first time I had ever known the joyful sound of the gospel, the glad tidings of salvation.

But the dear old Elder cast a shadow over the sunlight of my soul by saying to a company of Baptists at Brother Howells: “I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, yet mark my words, the next time you hear of our young friend David he will be preaching the gospel.”

When I returned to the college on Monday and tried to resume my studies it soon became evident to me that my mind and heart and interests were no longer there; that “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” In vain I tried to keep up with my class as before, for I could not. The Bible had now become my text-book and the word of God was my meat and drink. So, after a few days’ trial and failure, I gave it up and returned home to Illinois. My controlling desire now was to go home to my friends and tell them what great things the Lord had done for me, and how He had had compassion on me when I was ready to perish. But on account of the overflowed Wabash river we could not go until late in May, when I and my wife and little daughter Mary arrived at the home of my sister Sophia, near the dear old home of our departed parents and the church that they loved so well, which our father served as minister many, many years.

Elder McQueary came to see us soon; and he arranged to take me with him in his carriage to the Fayette church the first Saturday in June to attend the ordination of four ministers – brethren Wright, Millspaugh, Carter and Conner. At that wonderful meeting I again met the eminent Elders Wilson Thompson, Benjamin Jones and others, my father’s companions in the gospel, whom I had known in my boyhood. The meeting was large and was held in a pleasant grove or woodland. One after another the young preachers were called to go upon the platform and relate their religious experience, ministerial call, and views of the doctrine of the gospel. In doing so Brother Millspaugh (long since called to his blessed reward), who was the third speaker, said that he had been much perplexed about faith, as in some sense a condition, or having saving merit; and, notwithstanding the brethren had labored to get him to see it more clearly, as the gift of God and a fruit of the Spirit, and as embracing Christ as our only righteousness and salvation, in whom faith found all its merit and glory; yet, so dull was his mind and hard his heart, he had told them that, unless it pleased the Lord to open it to his understanding, he could not see it as they did. When he said this I at once felt that he had expressed the state of my own mind relative to the mysterious union between Christ and the church – about which Elder McQueary had talked much to me since we had been together. I not only had no understanding of it, but no special interest in it; but now my mind was so impressed with the earnest desire to understand this sacred union that I could not think of anything else and my heart was burdened with the unspoken prayer that the Lord might show it to me. While the last of the four, Brother Harvey Wright, talked to us, it was given me to see this blessed union between the heavenly Bridegroom and His bride – Jesus the Holy Head and the church His redeemed and sanctified body. My spirit now rejoiced in this enrapturing covenant-union, which had its rise in the everlasting love of God, and the dear Redeemer was more precious to me than ever.

The large Council of Elders and Deacons soon withdrew some distance, leaving a large congregation at the stand. My soul was so filled with the precious name of Jesus and my heart so burned with love to Him that I wondered why some one was not left at the stand to talk to us of Him; and it was with difficulty that I resisted the strong impression to go upon the stand and talk to them of the preciousness and glory of the beloved Son of God as our Savior; but as I was not a member of the church and a youthful stranger I thought it would not do to yield, and fearing to trust myself there, I walked away and sat down on a log, my heart feeling as if it would almost burst with its pent up emotions. Presently a still voice in my soul said: "Go, preach Jesus and His righteousness." This word was with such power that I could no longer remain silent, so I arose and went up a little valley, behind a hill, where I praised the Lord aloud, and the green trees and blue skies seemed to help me praise Him.

At sunrise the next morning I walked down to the river (Whitewater) at Brother Millspaugh's, and stood in sweet awe beholding the beauties and wonders of nature, when the words of Paul came into my soul with power: "Unto me who am lest than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

CHAPTER VI.

ADDED TO THE CHURCH.

The second Saturday in June, 1854, I was gathered with the Conn's Creek Regular Baptist church in a full meeting house. When Elder McQueary arose in the pulpit to preach, old Mr. Jacob Creek stood on the floor just in front of him, because he was hard of hearing, and while the minister preached the gospel in power the tears flowed from the aged man's eyes, the eloquent witnesses of his faith in Jesus and His power to save. He had been a near neighbor to us in my boyhood, an honest farmer, believing in conditional salvation. However, disliking the ways in the Methodist class he quit them, then went to hear my father preach for a time, but quit going. Not long after he came to our house on noon-time, while we sat in the shade resting from the farm-work, and said to father: "Mr. Bartley, you know that I went to hear you preach for some time, but have quit going." "Yes," said father, "Well I have come to tell you why I don't go to hear you any more, for I feared you might think it was because I have something against you as a neighbor, but I have not, for I like you as a neighbor and respect you." Father said: "No, I did not think so, Mr. Creek, for we have always been good neighbors." He then said: "The fact is, Mr. Bartley, your preaching does sap my foundation, and that is the reason why I do not go to hear you preach any more." At that time I was a light-hearted boy and felt no interest in gospel preaching, which this neighbor though was against him and cut him off from his foundation. My father was now called home, and after many years I thus met his old neighbor again; but oh how changed we both were! For now we both stood on Christ, the sure foundation, and rejoiced together in the same glad tidings of salvation that my father had faithfully preached.

After the sermon it was my long-wished-for privilege to stand in front of the pulpit and freely tell the church of all the way I had been led since that Sunday in November, 1844, when it was shown me that I was not built on Christ, until the present happy day, and how my heart was drawn to them in love. My tears flowed while I talked, and I think all in the house were in tears, but they were tears of comfort. When I sat down a dear sister told the church her experience of saving grace; then we were both gladly and warmly received into the congregation of the Lord, to be baptized the next day. With my folks and others I went to Brother McQueary's for the night; and before I sat down to the sumptuous dinner my soul was overwhelmed in darkness, doubts and fears, for the first time since that blessed revelation of Jesus to me in the upper room in Cincinnati, and I could not eat. I asked dear old Brother Caudell, a beloved companion of my father and a pillar in the church, to walk out with me, and we sat on the grass in the shade of a tree while I told him how greatly I feared that I had been deceived, and deceived the church; therefore I entreated him to lay my case before the church on Sunday and ask it to release me, because I was not fit or worthy to be baptized. I said that if I had such an experience as Sister Harlow told the church that day I would feel satisfied. He tried to relieve me, but my case seemed to become worse, and I felt that my situation was desperate, for he refused to submit my

case to the church for reconsideration, assuring me that they were all satisfied and felt that I had done only my duty. We both wept and talked, but my deep gloom and trouble remained. On Sunday the congregation was large and the preaching was in power, but for me there was no comfort, for my darkness was fearful, and I wondered why I had been so presumptuous as to offer myself to the church – a step which I had no power to undo. When the people all started to the river, a half-mile northward, I fell behind, turned aside and knelt behind a tree, entreating the Lord to show me what He would have me to do, and not suffer me to dishonor Him, but received no relief. Oh! I felt that this was the worst thing I had ever done, for it would be an unpardonable sin and an awful mockery for me to be baptized, feeling that I had no evidence of the Lord's approval, or that I was a proper subject, and I feared that I should feel condemned forever after. But, alas! It was too late – there was no help for me and I must submit – like one going to his execution. Having asked Elder McQueary some days before to sing at the river –

“Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of Thee.”

I arrived too late to hear this touching hymn, and he was praying. I stood trembling and my spirit fervently asked the Lord to give me the evidence in my baptism, if, indeed, it was well-pleasing to Him. The venerable minister led me out quite a distance in the beautiful river (Flatrock), then softly laid me under the water in this solemn burial. That moment all darkness, doubt and fear fled! Heavenly light and peace filled my soul, and it was the most blessed place I had ever been in! It was where Jesus Himself was laid, and when He arose heaven was opened unto Him! It was even so with me, for my whole being was full of divine light, love and gladness, and never had I known such perfect happiness as was mine when I walked up out of the water. The company of saints, too, looked so lovely and happy and the glory of God shone upon us all, I now beheld such an infinite fullness of salvation in the most blessed and lovely Savior that I wanted to speak forth His praises aloud, and could scarcely hold my peace, but as the sister was to be baptized, I did. O, sacred, blessed baptism! Divine emblem of the resurrection of the holy Son of God and of all the redeemed children of God!

Dear Brother Caudell went with me to assist in changing my clothing, and as we went he said: “Brother David, didn't you feel happy as you came up out of the water?” I answered: “Yes, Brother Caudell; very happy.” He rejoined, “I thought so, for I never saw as happy a look as there was on your face. Didn't you feel like talking?” “Yes, Brother Caudell, I could hardly keep from talking.” “I thought so,” he gladly responded. Having witnessed my awful gloom and distress, he now rejoiced with me in my happiness in the Lord. Surely this was a sweet foretaste of the bright resurrection glory and the joy of heaven, when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT IS MY DUTY?

Now my troubles, conflicts and unrest seemed to be at an end, and as we rode home to my sister's my peace was perfect; but when nearly there a still voice within me said: "Now you are in the church, what is your duty; for every one has a place to fill, and what is your place?" This checked my restful peace; but I quickly resolved that as soon as I entered the house I would take up the Bible, close my eyes, and ask the Lord to direct me to a Scripture that would show me the place He designed me to fill in the church. But it opened between the Old Testament and the New, and I felt rebuked, for an inward voice said: "See how forward and presumptuous you are in thinking the Lord had anything for you to do!" Yet I was impressed with a desire to know the Lord's will; so I turned to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and read it, and on to the fifth, yearning for something to relieve and comfort me; but nothing had any interest for me until I read verse 20: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." I could read no farther, nor take my eyes from these words of solemn command, but read them over and over; for it seemed that they were spoken to me, and they deeply affected me. Closing the book, I left the house and walked the yard, mentally saying: "This was spoken by the angel of the Lord to the apostles Peter and John, not to you, and why should you be so exercised about it?" But I could not prevent the angelic words from reverberating with power through the chambers of my soul: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." This was the beginning of a new experience and trial, and it came upon me so unlooked for; for I had expected to find the dear church a home of only tranquility, peace and rest of soul. How little did I know of the way!

The next day I walked on an errand beyond Brother McQueary's and called in to see him on the way and while there a rain set in. He took advantage of this and asked me if I was not exercised about speaking in the name of the Lord. I tried to evade an answer, but he told me that as I was now a member of the church he had a right to ask me and said it was my duty to tell him, either yes or no. So I briefly told him of my exercises on the day of the ordination and the day of my baptism. As I returned from the errand, again I called in to see him, asked him to walk out with me and entreated him with tears to say nothing of what he had required me to tell him, but he said he should make no rash promise and tried to comfort me. Supper being ready, he said: "Brother Bartley, ask a blessing," and I tried to do so, but the effort spoiled my appetite, for I felt that he and the family were ashamed of me as I was of myself. As soon as I was on my way home the tempter said to me: "Now look at yourself! You think about preaching, yet you can't ask a blessing without feeling ashamed of it." As I plodded along night soon set in, but the darkness within was greater and I was very wretched. For on the way home the conviction took possession of my mind that the church would give me license to preach at the next meeting, but my feeling was that I could not submit to this. That night I slept but little. The next two days my conflict and trouble seemed greater than I had ever endured, and I felt that I could scarcely

live without relief. I wandered about day and night – tried to search the Scriptures – piteously tried to implore the Lord for relief and release, but my cries were shut out, because my spirit was rebellious against the will of the Lord and the church. For while I fully believed the church would license me to preach the gospel at the next conference meeting, my mind was that, rather than submit I would prefer exclusion; therefore I implored the Lord to release me from such an ordeal, relieve me from my crushing trouble and give me peace again. For not only did I feel utterly unfit and insufficient for the gospel ministry, but I also greatly desired to be a successful physician. During this fearful mental conflict I vowed that I would die before I would try to preach, but instantly a silent voice within said: “You shall have to suffer in this body for preaching this doctrine.”

On Wednesday afternoon, while lying under a shade tree in the yard, my wife sat down by me and asked me what was the matter. I told her that the church would license me to preach at the next meeting, and I felt as if it would almost kill me. She tried to relieve my distressed mind by assuring me that the church would not do so premature a thing, but I told her it would, and asked her if she thought I could preach. She said, “No, I don’t.” At this I wept aloud, for I could no longer control the storm of conflicting emotions, yet I felt that she was right, and that I could not preach. But why, then, must I be so troubled about preaching?

That night I went from place to place, first in the orchard, then away in the woods, seeking access to the Lord in prayer, and fearing some one might hear me, but no relief could I find, for my prayers were shut out. The trouble was, I wanted relief in my own way, and my stubborn will would not yield. At last, almost exhausted, I came to an inviting log and sat down to rest. Just then a new train of thought and feeling possessed me, and my unyielding will gave way to a meek spirit of peace and child-like trust, and the fierce struggle ceased! The dear Master so gently gave me to see that the church was His and that my rebellion against it was against Him. Now I was overcome in sweet contrition, and every thought was brought into obedience unto Christ. I then felt a true spirit of prayer, and, kneeling, realized blessed access in the presence of the Lord, for He was very near and precious. In implicit trust I asked Him to bless the church with His mind and wisdom, guide it to do that which would honor and please Him, and give me grace and strength to obediently do His will. It was not late in the night, and my natural strength was nearly exhausted, but I went home so changed and peaceful, retired and slept, and my sleep was as when Jacob said, “The Lord is in this place!” For in a heavenly vision the lovely Savior stood over me in heavenly radiance, and in a moment we were standing before the congregation at the church. He stood at my right hand, placed the open New Testament in my hands, and enabled me to minister to the comfort of His people. While I spoke their faces expressed sympathy, gladness and love. He then gave me to understand that thus it should be and I should go and preach the gospel of salvation; that while I should meet with trials, He would be with me and put it into the hearts of His people to sympathize with and encourage me. That the Lord Jesus gave me this true vision I have had abundant assurance through my ministry of forty-two years.

At the next church-meeting, the second Saturday in July, 1854, the church voted that I should relate my exercises about speaking in the name of the Lord, and the pastor called me forward. I complied, but sat down and wept. Then, with some composure, I related what I have here written. Dear old Elder Nay was present, and on being asked for counsel, said he could witness to what I had related, and that he believed the Lord had called me to preach the gospel. Elder McQueary asked me one question: "Brother Bartley, have you ever seen anything in yourself that I looked like a preacher or made you think you could preach?" The answer was in my-heard and I said: "No, Brother McQueary, unless the Lord enables me, I know I cannot preach." With a smile he replied: "Well, Brother Bartley, we Old Baptists are a strange sort of people, for if we have a man among us that thinks he can preach and must preach, we will not let him preach; but if we have one who feels that he can't preach we make him preach." The church then liberated me to preach the gospel wherever God in His providence might cast my lot.

At the close of the Sunday meeting the pastor said: "Brethren Bartley and Jackson, two young preachers, will preach here next Sunday at 5 o'clock." This was a great shock to me, for no one had spoken to me about it and it troubled me all the week. But as Brother Jackson had been speaking in the church a few months I consoled myself with the thought that I should refuse, and he would speak to the people. At eleven the next Sunday we all went to hear Brother McQueary preach at a meeting house near us, and some of the brethren went home with us for dinner. To my dismay they told me Brother Jackson had gone on a visit to another church. At first I felt that I could not go to the appointment, but they kindly urged me, saying that it would hurt Brother McQueary's feelings if I refused, yet they expressed much sympathy for me. At last they got me started, but we arrived an hour late, and then I went away and tried to pray before going in the well-filled house. Brother McQueary told me to go in the pulpit as the people were waiting. I begged him to preach and let me off, but he refused. Taking me up with him he handed me the Bible and told me to select a text while he introduced for me. He was a man of God, full of earnest and deep feelings, though stern, and he fervently prayed for me. Then I arose and read: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. xxxv: 10. This text, so full of the gospel, had been in my mind all the week, and my thought was that if I had to speak to the congregation I might say something upon it in an experimental way, for its meaning seemed very clear.

First, I stated that the appointment was made without my knowledge; that I feared it was not of the Lord, but fleshly and wrong; that if it was not according to His will for me to speak in His name my desire was that He might seal my lips and not suffer me to dishonor His holy name before them; but, if it was His will, I believed He could enable even me to speak in His praise.

Turning to the subject to begin, I again read, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return," and was about to tell the meaning of "ransomed," when, as quick as one can put out a light, my mind was in awful darkness, and I could not utter a word, but stood dumb and confounded before all! Horror and shame overwhelmed me, for I felt that the Lord had rebuked me before them,

according to my word. Oh, why had I thus presumptuously gone into that sacred place, and made myself such a fearful example and warning? I felt that death would have been preferable to this, and the intensity of my dismay was so crushing it seemed that I must fall, unless I sat down, for it appeared a long time that I had stood there in that mute agony, knowing that all eyes were upon me, beholding how the Lord had condemned me before them. I turned my head over my shoulder, to see the seat and drop back on it – when, lo! The horror of darkness fled, and the Sun of righteousness arose unto me with healing in His wings. In an instant all was light and peace in my soul, my thoughts were liberated, my tongue was loosened, and I was enabled to speak about an hour upon the text with freedom and comfort. And as I entered into the divine meaning and blessedness of my text, tears filled the eyes of the brethren, expressive of their relief and comfort of heart, for they had seen my distress, and had felt and prayed for me, as the pastor told me. When I sad down, it was with the quiet peace of a comforted child, and a trusting faith that the Lord was with me.

Looking back through my extended ministerial life and travels and labors, from now until that first sermon, I may truly say that it was a faithful earnest and patter of all the way in which the Lord has led me, in fulfillment of the heavenly vision He gave me. For in waiting on my ministering, in a large measure light has been sown to me in darkness, and in me the words of the Lord Jesus have been fulfilled: “What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light.” This has had the effect to teach me my entire insufficiency for so great a work and to abase me before the Most High, that I might have an humble spirit. Indeed, from the time I knew the altogether lovely One as my Savior I have earnestly desired to be meek and lowly in heart as He is, and He has given me this desire through many afflictions and trials, which have bowed my spirit in deep sorrow and caused me to cry unto the Lord for graced to help in time of need.

CHAPTER VIII.

ORDAINED.

In September, 1854, we left the kind home of my dear sister and returned to Jasper county, Illinois, where my father had been called to put off his Christian armor about three years before. My membership remained in the old home church by my request. Perhaps twenty or more brethren and sisters were holding church letters, who had immigrated from Indiana, and they would importune me to speak at their frequent meetings, but I refused because of my long distance from the watch-care of the home church. Moreover, my fleshly mind again resisted my impressions to speak to the people in the name of the Lord, and I had stoutly resolved to resume the study of medicine. For I had persuaded myself that the Lord had not called me to preach the gospel, so incompetent and unfit was I, and so I had laid aside the Bible and taken up the medical text-books.

Thus time went on, and I seemed to be making satisfactory progress in the way of my own choosing and flattered myself that I should succeed. I had reasoned with myself that it was only a waste of time for me to study the Scriptures with the idea of expounding them, because I could do no good in the ministry, while as a physician I might be useful. I did not see then how ambitious, self-willed and stubborn I was, nor how short-sighted and faithless.

But one evening, near the approach of winter, I took up off the center table the medical book which I was so perseveringly reviewing and turned to sit down, when my eyes were riveted to the Bible on the table; conflicting emotions filled my heart and I stood irresolute and trembling; but the conflict was short, for the power of the Word asserted itself in my heart, and as a subdued child I laid down the coveted book, took up the dear Book of books, which was the more precious now for having been neglected. Thus ended my medical reading for all that winter, for the Bible had become my dearest text-book. So I learned, with Jeremiah, “that the way of man is not in himself.”

The spring of 1855, it was in the hearts of ten of us to send to our home churches in Indiana, and ask them to send their Elders and Deacons to constitute us into a gospel church. Accordingly, a goodly number of our beloved ministers and brethren came, among them Elders Asa Nay and Ransom Riggs, and the Conn’s Creek church sent to me by her messengers a letter in full fellowship to enter into the new church. But dear Elder McQueary came not with them, for the Lord had taken him to Himself.

On Saturday, May 18, 1855, we submitted to the faithful Council our church letters, articles and rules, and they cordially received us as a gospel church, known as “The Hickory Creek Regular Baptist Church of Christ,” and gave us the right hand of fellowship.

Of those ten seven have fallen asleep, and of all the dear messengers of the churches who thus received and comforted us, not one remains. They had been the beloved companions of my father, and with him they rest from their labors; and, also nearly all the ministers whom I knew in the beginning of my ministry.

My trials in the ministry now began anew and in earnest, of which I cannot speak at length, only to say that they were measured to me in the infinite wisdom and mercy of God, and that trials and afflictions are the common heritage of the Lord's servants. "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." This is the Divine plan and end, and it is to the glory of God.

The first year of the infant church was a time of severe trial, and no one was added to it. But after the night of weeping, then cometh joy in the morning; for the Master came and said: "Peace be unto you." He gave us joy and gladness, and greatly revived and built us up in the power and comfort of His grace. The second year fifteen, I think, were added by baptism and numbers by letter; the presence of the Lord was often felt in our worshipping assemblies, and we grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

The brethren now became urgent for my ordination to the full work of the gospel ministry, but I felt that it would be premature, and plead with them against it. For I could not yet feel satisfied that the Lord had put me in the ministry, and it seemed too great and sacred a work for me; therefore I looked for the time to come in the near future when I could and should quite trying to preach. Moreover, I feared the brethren wanted me ordained as a matter of convenience, as we had to frequently send to Indiana for a minister to come and baptize our added members; but they kindly assured me that they were satisfied the Lord had called me to the work and felt it their duty to have me ordained to it, or set apart. And so, with fear and trembling, I yielded; for I could not obstinately resist the church. Accordingly, nearly the same Elders and Deacons who pronounced us the church of Christ again convened in solemn Council with the church the second day of January, 1857, and by laying on of hands and prayer ordained me to the full work of the gospel ministry. The ministers officiating were Elders Riggs, Nay and Jackson (who had himself been recently ordained).

The Lord's good work of grace still went on in our midst, and there was much comfort in the church; for believers in Jesus were frequently baptized and added to it. Many of them were heads of families, influential and worthy; some of their children were also gathered into the fold. My eldest brother, Mordecai, was received on his letter from our old home church (Conn's Creek), and his wife by baptism. The wives of my brothers John, Amos, Johnson and Joseph, and my last named three brothers were all baptized and added to our company in process of time. At the time of my ordination dear Elder Nay baptized sisters Sophia Broderick and Rachel Bartley (John's wife) and our brother Joseph. The thermometer was below zero, and after cutting away the thick ice the water had to be stirred to prevent its freezing; yet there was no

harm. This showed strong faith and warm hearts. Later on it was my privilege to baptize my brother John's eldest son, James, the second wife of my brother Amos, my brother Joseph's wife and her sister, and a sister of my brother Mordecai's wife, besides many others. Still later I baptized for this church also the eldest son of my brother Johnson, Marion and his wife and her two sisters.

Many, very many, of all those loved ones have gone on before me to appear with Christ in His glory at the resurrection of all the redeemed – of which gospel baptism is the type and pledge – when death shall be swallowed up in victory. Of my brothers and their wives, Joseph and wife and the wife of Amos only are left, and my nephew, Jimmy, long since fell asleep in Jesus – two, also, of my own little family of four; first our sunny baby boy, when nearly twenty-one, Willet Tyler, and two days later his mother. That they all died in the Lord and live with Him, I have the comforting assurance; and, in the same cemetery with my father, they rest from their labors. A little while before our noble son closed his eyes his brother, Gilbert, asked him: “Tyler, do you feel that Jesus is with you?” He raised and clapped his hands, a heavenly smile lighted up his face and he said, “Yes, and that is why I am so happy.”

CHAPTER IX.

FLEEING, JONAH-LIKE.

It has been said that we are creatures of circumstances; and the force of circumstances, with our environments, certainly do operate upon us as causes and influences in shaping and directing our course in life.

Having spent my means as a medical student, the necessities of my family pressed upon me, and receiving no aid from the brethren and churches to whom I ministered in the gospel, my lot seemed trying and hard. Thus burdened and discouraged, I was tempted to think that if the Lord had really put me in the ministry and made it my work to preach the gospel of the kingdom. He would also have put it in the hearts and minds of His loving disciples, the children of the kingdom, to loosen my hands, by helping me bear this heavy double burden, and that my circumstances would not be so bitterly trying. Trying to make my dubious way under such clouds and darkness, fears and temptations, it often seemed to me scarcely possible that the Lord had put me in the ministry; therefore, much of the time I was strongly tempted to turn away from it and quit trying to preach. In my spirit I chafed and suffered, repined and mourned, and my heart was bowed under its heavy cross. I was doing some practice, but not enough to keep us out of debt and comfortable; for the country was generally healthy and the practice was divided among several doctors. The abiding conviction was in my mind that the brethren should cheerfully supply the lack in our necessities out of their abundance; but they did not seem to feel so, and I was too timid and cowardly to instruct them in this duty of mutual ministration and service; therefore I was really as remiss as were they. But all my life I had heard our ministers preach against the bishop or shepherd being supported by the flock, and I knew that our people were prejudiced against helping their preachers. Therefore I kept all these things to myself and pondered them in my heart, and my soul was pressed down as a cart beneath its sheaves.

It is due that I say of the brethren of the two churches I served, one about forty miles west of us, that they manifested warm appreciation of my ministry in every way, except this failure to minister to my necessities – and I was at fault in this, in not having the faithful courage to teach them the gospel rule: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” I should have impressed this “reasonable service” upon them, not more for my sake than theirs, but especially in faithfulness and honor to the Lord, whose servants we are. But I was young and inexperienced in the full work of the gospel minister, and there was no father in the ministry near me to counsel and help me.

The conflict between preaching and practicing medicine would rise again and again, and truly necessity was laid upon me to do both. Yet I felt that I should finally have to give up one or the other. It had seemed to me that if I could go away from the Baptists I might then lay down the ministry, devote myself to the sick and get along better, and I would occasionally talk to some of

the home brethren about doing this, but they would laugh at me, and had no idea that I would do such a thing.

Well, after struggling on thus in this unequal warfare about five years, from my ordination until the fall of 1861, the Lord then gave me up to have my own way, and I went away into the hospital service of the federal army as a nurse.

The Sunday before I started we had a blessed meeting, and we all felt the comforting presence of the Lord, causing our hearts to overflow in love to one another, and I felt that, it would be so hard for me to leave all that were dear and beloved, I would draw back if I had not already enlisted. For I was leaving the church without a preacher, as a flock without a shepherd, and some of the aged sisters wept when I left them.

Before we had been in camp two months a dear neighbor youth died in the hospital, and I was detailed to take him home for burial. After my arrival home his family (who were Baptists) sent a request for me to preach in our church-house at his funeral. This I could not refuse, although it seemed impossible; for the spirit of the ministry was gone from me and I had become as indifferent as any natural person. When the time came, as I walked down the aisle of the crowded house, shaking hands with my neighbors and brethren on the right and left, I was shocked to find that my love for the brethren had grown cold, so that I felt only the same natural regard for them as for the other friends. This made me feel that I was not a Christian, after all, and that it would be hypocrisy and a mockery for me to go in the pulpit and try to preach. But on reaching the front, dear old Brother Jerry Ferguson grasped my hand and wept. My cold indifference was gone the next moment, the love of the brethren rushed in and filled my whole being and I dropped in a seat, overcome with emotion. It was a relief and comfort to me then to preach, and the Lord gave me liberty.

But alas! how could I ever bear to go away and leave the dear children of God again? For, with a post, I now deeply felt:

“Here my best friends, my kindred dwell;
Here Christ, my Savior, reigns.”

The next day I had to leave for Camp Butler, and sorrowful indeed was the parting with my little family and all. At midnight I re-entered the hospital, crushed and broken in spirit, and from that time on I was a suffering invalid – sick in mind and body. A complication of ailments set in mind and became chronic, induced by exposure and soul-trouble. For now I sorrowfully felt that I had fled from the commandment of the Lord, as much so as did Jonah, and had rebelled against Him and grieved the Holy Spirit.

The loving Son of God, the Father, had meekly and obediently endured all things and laid down His righteous life for me; but now, because of some sacrifices and trials, I had forsaken Him and

His blessed service, in the delusive hope of making the way better and my cross lighter. How terribly deceived by Satan and the flesh! Instead, my troubles were dreadfully increased; for I now endured the hidings of the Lord's countenance, felt that I had sinned against the light and knowledge and forsaken my own mercies.

If the South had rebelled against earthly authority, I against Heaven. I had tried to satisfy my conscience with the plea that it was a worthy cause and good work for me to enter the army to minister to the suffering soldiers; but He who saved me from perdition had said to me: "Go, preach Jesus and His righteousness;" therefore, I was disobedient, and had denied my Redeemer and Lord. Seeing and feeling this, I was filled with anguish of spirit and deep repentance. My soul was solitary, utterly desolate and comfortless. I preferred to be alone in my cold and dismal tent, where I could read the sorrowful psalms of David of old, so expressive of the troubles of my own heart – and I could not read any other part of the Bible. For the Lord had taken His Spirit and the light of His countenance from me and left me to my own wretched self. Yet I dared not complain or murmur at this fearful affliction and suffering; for I had willfully turned away from the blessed work of the gospel ministry, forsaken the brethren, and brought all this calamity upon myself. I remembered how good they had been to attend upon my ministry, their Christian confidence in me and loving fellowship for me, so that great had been our mutual comfort and joy in our meetings, for the Lord had blessed us with His heavenly presence. And as all this came back to me in my forlorn camp-life, I most painfully felt that those were heavenly places, when contrasted with these. For, instead of the society of home and spiritual kindred, I was in the midst of the most ungodly and profane men and deprived of almost every comfort. Hence, as the winter slowly advanced, my maladies grew worse, until it was evident that, without a change and relief, death must soon take me out of the army.

To die thus was a thought that I could not bear, for I earnestly desired that the Lord might first mercifully heal my backslidings and restore unto me the joy of His salvation, before my departure, and for this blessing my broken and humbled spirit fervently prayed. Yet my prayers seemed shut out from His holy heaven, and I sadly feared that I had too grievously gone astray from Him to hope for the return of His presence and blessing on earth, and must die in this deep affliction and darkness. Still, my trust and hope in God abided with me, and I firmly believed that, though He might suffer me to die in this most wretched state, yet He would raise me up to His holy heaven to suffer, sorrow and weep no more, and to die no more. This was the balm of my heart and solace of my soul – and it was all there was left me.

In February, 1862, we were encamped at Ft. Henry, Tenn., where Gen. Grant marshaled all the forces under his command, preparatory to transporting them up the river to Pittsburg Landing; therefore the regimental hospitals were abandoned, and the sick and disabled were sent away to the general hospitals, upon the orders of the senior surgeons of the respective regiments, without which no one could have leave of absence. On this account I had to share a wretched little tent with two soldiers, without fire, lying on a thin mattress and it on the wet ground. The season was very rainy, with sleet and snow, and at times the water would run in under my

bedding until my garments would be wet, and the only way to either dry or warm was to stand out in the inclement weather before a smoky fire of green timber. Then, the food we had to subsist on was unfit for a sick person, and, moreover, I was suffering greatly from chronic indigestion and dysentery, so that my food was often thrown up, and I was literally both starving and freezing.

Our senior surgeon was Dr. Edgar, a stranger to me, who, at the time of my enlistment in the hospital service with him, had promised me leave of absence in March, to go home and settle an estate as administrator, on which condition I had enlisted; but he was deaf to both his promise and my almost dying condition, for he coldly refused every appeal to grant me a sick furlough, and would not let me go home. Although he knew my extreme disabilities, which should have moved him to compassion, ye he rudely told me that I should rather leave my bones bleaching on the field of battle than to want to go home before the rebellion was put down. Turning from him, I then applied to the commander of the regiment, Col. Ross, a humane man and a Christian, I trust, who kindly did all in his power to have me sent away where I could be cared for; but every effort failed, for Gen. Grant's order was rigid that no one should be permitted to pass through the lines on leave of absence, except he had a sick furlough from the regimental surgeon. As a last effort, the noble Col. Ross sent a written appeal in my behalf to Gen. Grant himself, but received no answer. Hope now died in my heart, and I sorrowfully felt that I should not be permitted to see my family and kindred, brethren and friends again. While this was painfully trying, I felt that I had brought it all upon myself and could not murmur against the Lord for it.

As the hard-hearted Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel go, so did my case appear as deplorable as theirs, and there was no escape from my bitter afflictions and cruel bondage – only death.

CHAPTER X.

DELIVERED.

On a cold and rainy day an order came that we should put up three days' rations in our haversacks, and be ready to strike our tents and embark late that evening to sail up the river; but later a second order came that we could retire and sleep about two hours, and that we would be called up to go on board the boats about midnight to run up to Pittsburg Landing, where a great battle was to be fought. To me this was as a summons unto my speedy death.

In the evening the rain was succeeded by a heavy snow-storm, which continued until late in the night. I was so much debilitated that I would become sick and faint at times, and have to lie down on the wet ground to rest. About 8 o'clock at night, while slowly making my way back to my dismal tent, and meditating the fearful perils which shut me in, a peaceful feeling of resignation and quiet trust filled my heart, and in mind I took a tender leave of all at home, confident that I should not live to return and see them; but was comforted with the heavenly assurance that, although I must die thus painfully, yet the Lord would receive me to Himself, and all my sufferings and sorrows should be ended forever.

But before reaching my tent my mind was impressed with a desire to go beyond it to Col. Ross's office-tent, and see if it was possible for him to send me away that night; but my second thought was that it could avail nothing and would annoy him, and I tried to repress this desire; yet it had taken such possession of my mind that I passively walked on, and the guard passed me in the tent. The cololen kindly saluted me, asked me to be seated and warm myself before the cheerful fireplace, and inquired how I felt. His kindness gave me courage to say: "Cololen, I am worse and growing weaker. If I have to go up on this campaign, and be exposed to the weather and the hardships of the camp, I could be of no service, but would only be in the way, and could not survive long." "I know it, doctor," he replied. "You should have been sent away to a hospital some time ago, but you know every effort has failed." I answered: "Colonel, can't you think of any possible way to send me away?" He paused, then said: "I this moment think of one way; if it fails, then there is no chance. This afternoon three sick soldiers were sent from our regiment on board the steamer Tigress, to go down to a general hospital in Paducah. If you could get Dr. Edgar to detail you as a nurse for them, you could there get a sick furlough to go home." I quickly asked: "Colonel, can't you do it? It would be useless for me to appeal to Dr. Edgar, and I can't do so." He answered: "You know the army regulations and that it would be against the rules, for this authority belongs to him." "Yes, I know, colonel; but then, you are the higher in authority than he is, and will you not take the responsibility?" Dropping his head a moment, he raised it and smilingly said: "I will. If I can't give you a sick furlough to go home, I will do the next best thing – send you where you can get one." He quickly wrote the order, detailing me as a nurse for the three sick soldiers from our regiment on board the Tigress; also stating that I was sick and should be sent home – and he laughed at the idea of sending me as a nurse,

remarking that I needed a nurse more than they, no doubt. He told me to take the order to the adjutant's tent and have it recorded, saying that I would have to hurry or I might be too late, as it would soon be time for the Tigress to start.

Inspired with renewed spirit and hope, I did hurry; for the possibility of returning to home and life again quickened my movements, and lifted me above my sufferings and weakness. Hastily making ready my valise and roll of bedding, the good-bys were quickly taken, and I set out for the river, a half-mile or more away, the darkness lighted only by the fast-falling snow, which had covered the ground with a white sheet – wondering the while whether there would be any one at that late hour to set me across the first great bayou, a fourth of a mile wide, perhaps. Just as I reached its bank, Lo! John Bartley, a soldier from Alton, Ill., whose division was camped on the island beyond, was pushing off his skiff from shore. By the light of his lantern I knew him – having met him before and ascertained that we were fourth cousins. He gladly took me in, saying that I would have been left in a minute more. This seemed a fortunate hap, but it did not then occur to me that the good hand of God was in it; for I had long felt that He had abandoned me to my own way. On the other shore we shook hands, and I hurried on as best I could, on top of the breastworks thrown up across the island. The snowflakes fell thick and fast, adding to my burden, so that I would stop and shake it from my hat and overcoat, wishing that it did not snow so, because it hindered my speed, and I feared my failing strength would not hold out, or that I might be too late; yet but for the light of the snow I could scarcely have made my way for the darkness. Near the river was a narrow but deep bayou, and just as I reached it three or four noisy soldiers walked out on the lower deck of the guard-steamer to put out the lights for the night (about 10 o'clock), and I hailed them with all the voice I could command, but almost despaired of making them hear me – for they were all talking and laughing loudly, and my voice was weak. At last one said, "Hush, boys, isn't some one calling?" Another said, "No; I guess it is the noise of the wind." Then I made a desperate effort and succeeded, to my great relief, for I was in great fear. They crossed the narrow strip of land and came over to me in a flatboat, into which I climbed, and as I did so one said, "Well, comrade, if you had been a minute later you would have been left, for we had come out to put out the lights." They directed me along a line of gangways from one steamer to another (for the river was full of them to carry the entire army up it that night), until I reached the longed-for Tigress, far out and down. At last that most trying march of my life – and for my life – was ended, the goal was reached and I was rescued – mercifully delivered from that awful thralldom. Shaking off the wet snow and ascending to a commodious cabin, I laid down valise and bundle, overcoat and hat, and sank in an arm chair before a red-hot stove, almost completely exhausted, feeling that I could not have been held out but little longer.

In a few minutes two well-dressed men came in and sat down on the other side of the large stove, not seeming to notice me, and one said to the other: "Captain, how soon will you pull out of here?" "Just as soon as this snow-storm blows over a little, so we can see to pilot the boat. If it had not been for the snow-storm we should have been gone two hours ago." Never were words spoken more wonderful to me; for they told me that the merciful God, who rules the storm, had

sent down that snow and held the boat, and that He had not forsaken me, as I supposed, but was yet with me and had thus delivered me from so great a peril and death. O how precious the assurance that the Lord cared for me still, and that my life and well-being were precious in His sight! My sweet emotions of love and gratitude to Him who had thus marvelously saved me were too full for utterance in words, and the place seemed a very heaven to me; for I comfortably felt the presence of the Lord, and my meditations of Him were sweet all that night – for I did not lie down to sleep, being on duty as nurse, but rested in that chair. I soon found my three patients and told them I was there to wait on them until we reached a hospital in Paducah – but they needed very little attention.

About sunrise we landed at this city and an ambulance carried us to a comfortable hospital, where each of us were taken to neat beds, and I saw the three no more. A kind citizen physician soon came to me, examined me and said: “My friend, I would advise you to go home; for you can’t get well here, but with good water and kind attention at home, you might recover. I will give you a sixty days” furlough if you will go home.” As I did not like to seem too anxious, I said that I had no money to pay my way home. But he kindly assured me that there would be some way for me to get there; so it was soon settled that I should go, greatly to my joy. That afternoon I was able to walk down to a near store, where I offered a revolver for sale – which a prisoner after the surrender at Ft. Donaldson had begged me to give him a dollar for, and I did so to favor him, having no use for it myself – the only firearm I ever owned. To my glad surprise, a clerk in the store kindly gave me \$10. for it, and I heartily thank him; for this would pay my way home, and I felt wonderfully helped.

The next morning I set out, homeward-bound; but as it was Saturday, and the trains did not run on Sunday, I stopped at Jonesboro, Ill, having learned that my friend and brother, Col. True, was there with a new regiment. He very generously lodged me at his headquarters until Monday, and then gave me a free pass on the cars as far as I could go toward home – to Effingham, Ill. He did more; he transferred me to his regiment, and appointed me on his regimental staff as hospital steward, thus rescuing me from the cruel power of Dr. Edgar, who had been bend on sacrificing me – only because he once overheard me condemn the cruelties which some of our marauding soldiers inflicted upon peaceable old men, women and children in the South. Through the merciful hand of God, I was now free from him, and saw him no more. Whether he learned that our humane Col. Ross sent me away from his merciless tyranny, I know not; but I hope that God had mercy upon him, as He was merciful to me.

After my return home I seemed to improve a little at first; so that I made a business trip to central Indiana, near out old home, in the settlement of an estate as administrator – alluded to before. But my diseases again grew worse and brought me very low, insomuch that my recovery was almost despaired of by my friends; and at the end of the sixty days I was barely able to be propped up in bed while I wrote a few lines to Col. True, telling him that I would report in person as soon as able; for I believed the Lord would raise me up again to “preach the preaching that He had bidden me,” which I was then willing to cheerfully do.

In the time of this long sickness at home, when the kind neighbors and brethren would come in to visit and sit up with me, they often grieved my spirit by their complaints at the weather and backward spring, expressing fears about raising a crop; for this sounded to me like murmuring against the Lord, who was so merciful, kind and good. And for this I would kindly chide them, and remind them how good He was to us all for which we should thankfully trust in Him, knowing that He would provide and care for us. As soon as able to ride on a bed in a wagon to Olney, twenty-five miles, where I took a train, I reported to Col. True, then encamped at Paducah, who was gladly surprised on seeing me; for he told me that, after getting my letter, he had expected to hear of my death. I at once made application for a discharge from the army, which he kindly assisted me in obtaining. At the same time he generously offered me the position of second surgeon if I would stay; but I declined it, fearing to go into disobedience again, "lest a worse thing come unto me." I did not tell him this, however, not knowing that he could sympathize with me. But after many years, when he had grown gray, it was my privilege to meet with him as a fellow-preacher, when he told me that he not only understood my troubles in the army and felt a sympathy for me, but that he himself was also troubled then about preaching the gospel, and had been before entering the army, and that he had resisted it for twenty years before yielding. His great kindness and brotherly interest while in the army endeared him to me for life, and I rejoice that the Captain of Salvation and Prince of Peace has made him a true soldier of the cross, to proclaim "on earth peace."

In seeking for a discharge from the war, it was necessary that I should hunt up my former regiment and obtain an official paper from my captain; therefore, I boarded a steamer for Pittsburg Landing, and from there rode on horseback over the fearful battle-ground on the way to Corinth, where Grant's mighty army was again ready for battle, and there, after a long search, I found the regiment and Capt. English, in whose company was my enrollment. It was Sunday afternoon when I found his division and quarters, and as I slowly walked down the long line of tents, fronting westward, they were opened out to the warm sunshine, and it was a sad sight to see the small remnant of soldiers, looking so dejected, as they reclined in their tents, their ranks terribly thinned by the ravages of war and pestilence. The companies were sorrowfully cut down, one having only about thirty left. At the head of the row was the tent of Capt. English, who kindly received me, and as we talked my eyes fell on the noble saddle horse of Col. Ross among others in a grove a little from us, and I said, "Captain, where is Col. Ross?" With emotion he told me that he was mortally wounded in the recent battle at Pittsburg Landing, and died three days after. O, how sad! Humane, generous, noble Ross! Me he saved from such a fearful peril and death, but himself he could not save. I believe he was a Christian (he was a Methodist), and that the Lord took him to Himself, where the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick," "neither shall they learn war any more."

At last the time came when, with many tender regrets, I took a final leave of the army, at Kenton Station, Tenn., in July 1862, bade adieu to Brig. Gen. True and my old friends with him, and, with a full and honorable discharge from the army, set out once more for home, now

the Lord's freeman, henceforth to serve as a willing soldier in the army of the Captain of Salvation, the all-conquering Prince Immanuel, the triumphant and most glorious King Jesus, until He shall bid me put off my armor, lay down the cross, give me a full and blessed discharge from the good fight of faith, and graciously bestow upon me the blissful and everlasting crown of immortality and eternal life.

Elder David Bartley